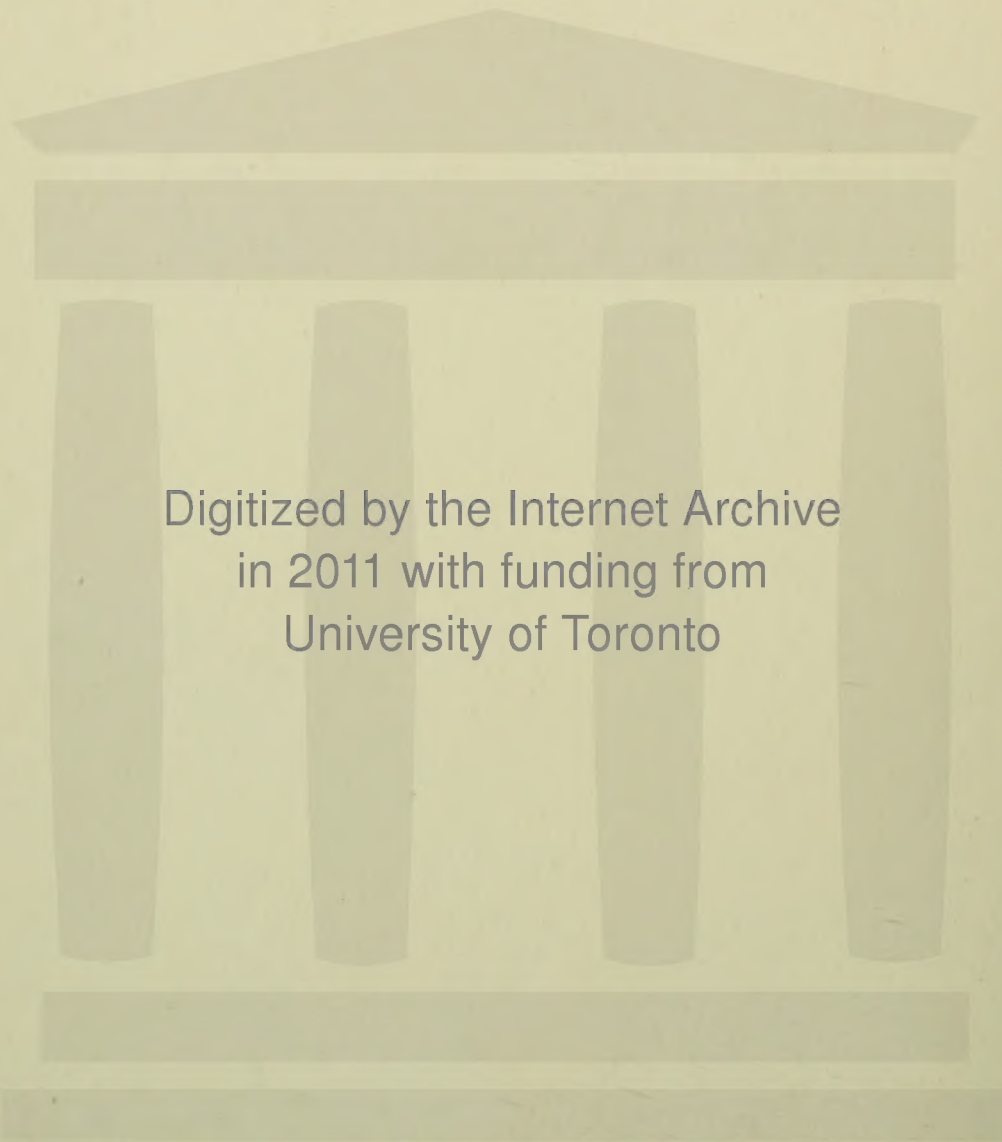




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BRITISH WATER-COLOUR
PAINTING AND PAINTERS
OF TO-DAY

J. LITTLEJOHNS, R.B.A., R.B.C., A.R.W.A.



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BRITISH WATER-COLOUR
PAINTING & PAINTERS
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FROM THE SAME PUBLISHERS

THE ART OF PAINTING IN PASTEL

By LEONARD RICHMOND, R.O.I., R.B.A., and
J. LITTLEJOHNS, R.B.A., R.B.C., A.R.W.A.

With a Frontispiece and Foreword by FRANK BRANGWYN, R.A.

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BRITISH WATER-COLOUR PAINTING & PAINTERS OF TO-DAY

BY

J. LITTLEJOHNS, R.B.A., R.B.C., A.R.W.A.



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FOREWORD

THE author desires to record his grateful appreciation of the kindly co-operation of the artists who willingly permitted their pictures to be reproduced, and who freely contributed unique information, weighty opinions, and inspiring advice.

J. L.

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INTRODUCTION

WATER-COLOUR is an English Art—our one undoubted solid contribution to the progress of painting. It arose here, grew and flourished in its native soil, and, while it has spread over the world, still remains distinctively our own. Our climate is peculiarly conducive to its employment, and our temperament seems to be exceptionally well expressed by its specific qualities. It has proceeded in a quiet reasonable course, extending its scope and revealing its beauties. A generation ago it seemed as if its possibilities had been completely exploited, but the present day of inquiry has already given it a fresh outlook and a new life. The atmosphere of restriction which had enveloped it, on account of satisfaction with limited achievements, has given place to that of freedom to extend in unforeseen directions. To-day the pundits who decreed that this, that, or the other treatment was an unworthy trick are discountenanced by the success of most of the innovations they denounced. Eminent water-colourists paint in almost any and every style that satisfies their needs for personal expression.

There is a section of public opinion—regrettably large and thoughtless—whose preferences are dominated by a sentimental regard for the past, and who like to be lulled by the repetition of accustomed forms. To such the exhibitions of present-day water-colours are apt to be disturbing on account of the variety in conception and method. Pale-tinted drawings, realistic transcriptions, decorative adaptations, vague suggestions, definite

INTRODUCTION

statements—all on the same walls—proclaim the absence of any generally acknowledged standard; and when individual artists alter their style as new convictions follow fresh investigations, those who prefer to be soothed by sameness, rather than to be exhilarated by change, are troubled and bewildered. On the other hand, there is another section of public opinion—just as unformed and more dogmatic—to whom no painting is of interest unless it indicates a violent break with the past to something utterly different, or a return to the childishly crude or offensively chaotic.

The styles considered and illustrated here occupy a position between the two extremes, appealing to those whose tastes and judgments respect the strivings of the past without being hampered by their appreciation of the present, and are able to discriminate between the intelligent desire for growth and the vapid craving for mere novelty. They do not sigh for the passing of yesterday or fear for the coming of to-morrow; nor do they cavil at to-day because it is not yesterday or to-morrow. It is to those that the work of the artists represented in this book will make the most appeal.

What place this present-day school of water-colour will take in the history of the art cannot, of course, be determined now. The future may have far greater things in store. But if the work of the living masters, and the general standard of accomplishment of water-colourists is compared with any preceding period, would it be rash to prophesy that our own may be regarded, eventually, as the great age of water-colour painting?

BRITISH WATER-COLOUR PAINTING & PAINTERS OF TO-DAY

The Nature of Water-colour

A PRELIMINARY glance at our forty illustrations representing the work of twenty painters will arouse in the uninitiated considerable surprise. There is so much variety that there appears to be no common aim; each artist seems to go his own way uninfluenced by any authority and responsive to no laws save those he makes to suit himself. This exhibition of individuality is undoubtedly the most remarkable feature of the present phase of water-colour—its variety in intention, treatment, and effect. Not long ago the work of one painter might be mistaken at first sight for that of several others: to-day there are dozens of distinguished painters who stand alone. It is no longer possible, as in the old days, to write a treatise and lay down laws as to how a water-colour is painted. One can only describe how each of many artists has decided to paint his own water-colours; and while the description is being written the artist may be elaborating a new way!

The situation is confusing to the timorous student, and embarrassing to those who are expected to give instruction. For it is obviously absurd to pretend to say of any one style, “This is the way to do it,” when hundreds of artists are painting successfully in many other styles.

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But there should be ample compensation in the freedom to experiment which naturally arises out of the destruction of established conventions. Our problem is not to do it as others have done, but find methods that suit ourselves. For the adventurous there is always the call of uncharted seas.

When, however, we examine our illustrations more closely we shall find that, notwithstanding the undoubted variety, the fundamental differences are but few, and that there are certain principles common to every picture. The outward expression is individual, but the inner purpose is the same.

The first great fact to be noted is that none of the artists have attempted to force the medium to do anything that is foreign to its nature. All have learned, by first-hand experience, to recognize and respect the characteristics peculiar to water-colour, and to act as friendly co-operators and not as alien dictators. They never call upon the medium to do anything beyond its capacity; because they know when the limit is reached. This may seem to be a truism, so well known that it is scarcely worthy of mention; but in point of fact it needs to be emphasized, from the beginning to the end of our considerations. For the main reason for the muddy messes so often produced is not so much the result of technical incompetence or lack of care, but ignorance of what the brush, colour, and paper are able or not able to do when brought into conjunction.

Many effects in nature, which cannot be remotely imitated in transparent water-colour, can be rendered in oils, tempera, or pastel with comparative ease. Other effects *can* be rendered, but only by means of skill which would take most artists so long to attain that they would be better employed in painting by a simpler method. Some methods so nearly approach the

THE NATURE OF WATER-COLOUR

accidental that very few artists are endowed with sufficient powers of control to take advantage of fortune.

It might be possible to leave the thousands of lights on the spray from a wave or a fountain, or on the leaves of a wet tree through which the sun is shining. The beginner tries and fails: the artist does not try. He sets such effects aside to be treated in a more suitable medium, or suggests them without attempting to imitate. In fact, there is something to be said for the dictum that the main difference between the professional artist and the amateur is that the former has discovered the easiest ways to produce the desired results.

The second great fact to be noted is that the chief characteristic of water-colour is its wateriness. This fact, like the first, may seem too obvious to be worth mentioning. Everyone knows it; but to judge from most early attempts it is in the nature of water-colours to conspire, with irritating frequency, to a state of thick, heavy muddiness! Strange as it may seem to those who have not tried, this comparative dryness is the direct result of the intense fluidity of the medium. The beginner, finding that a full brush of colour insists on running where it will, instead of where he wants it to go, gives up the struggle with fluidity, lessens the water to a more controllable proportion, and applies the thicker mixture in small touches. In short, he begins by avoiding the one difficulty which must be overcome, in the early stages of practice, and so misses all that makes transparent water-colour worth while—all that justifies its existence.

Whatever the cost, a considerable measure of control must be attained right at the beginning. The expenditure of a month of persistent practice, a pile of good paper, several tubes of

BRITISH WATER-COLOUR PAINTERS OF TO-DAY

expensive colours, and a waste-paper basket filled with failures, is the highest form of economy, if by such depressing means the waywardness of water is brought into obedience to the will of the painter. There are few beginners, however, who would not falter at the prospect of such a succession of trials. They would turn to oils or give up the hope of painting altogether. Happily this preliminary training can often be productive of useful and entertaining results, and, may be, of successful pictures. Ordinary skill and care should produce cheering evidences of better things to follow, and, what is of much greater importance, lead to the selection and treatment of fitting subjects. Systematic study need not be dull; in fact, it *must* not be dull. Every venture should be an adventure. The quest will be all the more fruitful if it is a continuous thrill.

Let us take an apt example. Anyone, after half-a-dozen attempts, can paint a flat wash of pale blue all over a quarter imperial sheet of paper. When this is dry he can paint another flat wash of rather dark purplish-grey over the lower third of the paper with an undulating edge at the top. When this is dry he can paint a still darker flat wash of warm green or brown across the bottom of the paper, and there (as shown in Fig. 1, facing p. 5) is a vast sky, distant mountains and an upland foreground. Not one square inch is like Nature, which is full of delicate gradations, but this arrangement of three flat tones has got more of the essence of such a scene than the spotty, over-detailed and over-gradated specimens of inefficiency and ineffectiveness that fills the beginner with hopelessness. This example proves, more clearly than any number of words can do, how nearly flat are many of Nature's tones, and that no statement of subtle gradations is usually better than over-statement. With a little

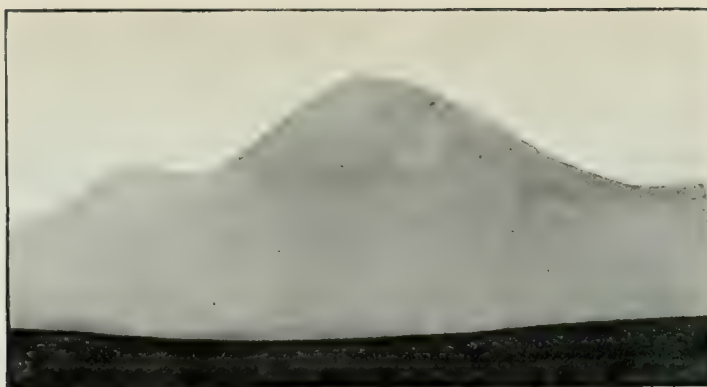


FIG. 1



FIG. 2

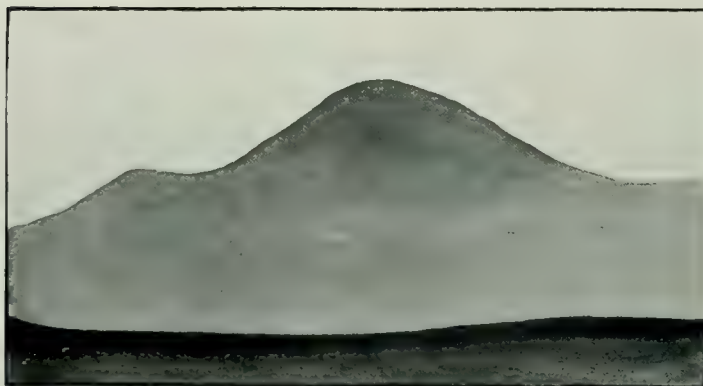


FIG 3

THE NATURE OF WATER-COLOUR

practice on these lines (all the more valuable for being practical applications) there should be little difficulty in producing more elaborate and realistic pictures by flat tones such as Fig. 2 (opposite).

A glance at Fig. 3 will be enough to show what a large step towards representation is taken by using the simplest kind of gradated wash instead of, or in conjunction with, flat washes. The poster-like suggestion of the flat tones has been changed to something approaching actual representation.

See what is happening: pictures are growing out of the simplest of preliminary exercises. Handling is being acquired without drudging. Technique without tears!

Soon the beginner will find that his unexpected mastery is limited, and that his selection of subjects is decidedly small. All his skies must be cloudless. He cannot paint a rounded cloud, for instance, because he can gradate his washes only in one direction at a time; but he has made a sound start, and at this point will be well advised to secure a copy of the new edition of *The Technique of Water-Colour Painting* (Pitman, 21s.), so that he may continue systematically his efforts to cultivate the requisite control. In this way he will learn much of the methods illustrated in many of the examples in the present book.

The third great fact about transparent water-colour is that each wash is modified by the one underneath, both in colour and in tone. The painter has, therefore, to keep constantly in mind the effect the succeeding washes to be superimposed after painting the first. The problem is complicated by the fact that all so-called transparent pigments are not equally transparent—a few are decidedly opaque. The consequence is that sometimes the result of superimposition is the same as mixing, but at other times

BRITISH WATER-COLOUR PAINTERS OF TO-DAY

decidedly different; and, still more confusing, a considerable difference sometimes takes place when the washes are reversed. Chrome on Prussian blue, for example, gives a paler and yellower green than Prussian blue on chrome. It is obviously necessary, therefore, to find out by experiment what happens when the pigments the beginner intends to use are combined in different ways and proportions. Most painters discover by spoiling many pictures, but it is an inexcusably stupid way. Experimenting with pigments is as fascinating as it is valuable, and should be a regular and recognized part of every painter's education. This is the undoubted reason why the work of a certain few water-colourists stands out from the rest as unique. These painters know more about the qualities of the pigments and how to exploit those qualities. They are more complete craftsmen. They may not be better artists, but they can make more of the artistic powers they have. The fact that many great painters have not troubled to acquire this knowledge is no justification for our ignorance. The great can better afford to be ignorant than can the rest of us, because they can do more with limited knowledge. But most great artists are ceaseless experimenters; it is the lazy and the incompetent who pooh-pooh investigation.

The fourth great fact is the influence of the paper. Several are so thin that a single wash stretches them so that they become almost unmanageable; others can be used after hours of immersion in water. Some can be scrubbed with a hard brush and scraped with a knife, and still remain intact. A few are nearly as porous as blotting paper, so that the colour sinks in and becomes part of the substance. A few are so hard and burnished that the colour remains on the surface.

THE NATURE OF WATER-COLOUR

Millions of hours, and miles of paper, have been wasted because the students have not discovered what must inevitably happen when any given quantity of water is applied to any particular kind of paper. Many painters limit the problem by sticking to one kind. This may or may not be an evidence of wisdom. If, after trying several kinds, an artist finds he can best express himself with one and is not interested in the methods necessary to use the others, it is well; but if he chooses one without trying the others, he can never be certain that he could not express himself better by using some other paper, and that may be bad. Here again experiments should be regarded as an essential part of the acquirement of the art. Almost any paper may do equally well for the genius (personally I doubt it, but admit the possibility), but few can hope to transcend the material conditions of the craft. Actually most brilliant painters are intensely interested in paper, and, whether they end by adopting one kind or many, they lose no opportunity to try all. It is manifestly absurd to limit one's powers of expression in the slightest degree, by neglecting to make the necessary inquiries.

Sketching from Nature

SOME readers may be surprised to hear that many water-colourists seldom or never use water-colours when sketching from nature. There are several reasons for this, as will be gathered from the practice of some of the painters whose works are described and illustrated. But all of them have, at some time, painted directly and laboriously out of doors.

With a few there comes a time when a pencil note is sufficient; but not till the artist has gathered a mass of exact experiences which he can recall at will. Others use different mediums for sketching—pastels for speed or oils to cope with swift changes in temperature. The beginner, however, will have to go through the mill and make the best of what is not always a pleasant experience.

The real reason for sketching in the same medium to be used in the finished picture is seldom appreciated. It is not primarily to get a knowledge of Nature's construction colour and effects. That, perhaps, could be better done in oils. The main reason why the water-colour painter should learn to sketch in water-colours is that he may find out how to *treat* Nature in that medium. He will soon discover, as was mentioned in the introduction, that the expression of some effects are beyond the scope of water-colour while others are comparatively simple. Gradually his conclusions will crystallize as his experience grows. This experience can be gained only on the spot. But later, when his technical style is formed and he is aware of the possibilities and limitations—what water-colour

SKETCHING FROM NATURE

can do and what it cannot do—then, maybe, he can sketch in any medium or in none at all.

On the south coast, during the war, when boy-scouts were supposed to be lurking behind every rock and tree, watching for sketching spies, I painted several pictures with more than usual speed and certainty because I was compelled to memorize the form and colour, mentally construct the composition, go straight indoors, and paint the picture. It was a stern and salutary education, but the beginner could hardly have profited by such prohibition. He must get out to Nature as soon as he can put a few simple washes on paper with a fair amount of accuracy.

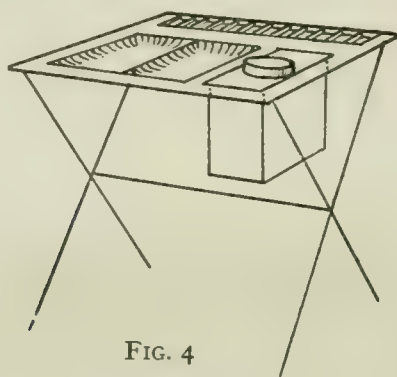
His next problem is that of the choice of outfit; and it is a problem of considerable dimensions. There can never be any one solution for all—a perfect sketching apparatus for everyone. Many artists display such an enthusiasm for their pet devices that one might conclude they had discovered the only satisfactory way. Personally, I have never found one of them to be of any use to me, and do not expect that mine will suit many others; but perhaps some readers may find the outfit I used, before taking to pastel exclusively, worthy of a trial.

I discarded an easel, finding it to be an impediment; because I often wanted the paper to be nearly upright at one moment and nearly horizontal at the next. Occasionally I wanted to hold it upside down. So I rested the paper on my knees and held it with the left hand. My arrangement for holding colour and water is best described by a sketch (Fig. 4). It consisted of a large palette with a rectangular hole, into which a water tin was dropped, and fitted to four detachable aluminium legs about the size of the legs of my sketching stool. The whole

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paraphernalia (including a box of paints in tubes) went into a specially made bag.

There is only one formidable objection to the plan, viz., that all the water carried gets dirty when making one sketch. This, however, could be remedied by dividing the tin into two parts, as shown in the end view (Fig. 5). Anyway, the outfit gave



me the nearest approach to working in the studio, where I never use an easel but stand at a large table.

Having decided upon an outfit, if only temporarily, the next thing is the choice of subject. Much of the distressing failures attending early efforts is caused by attempting subjects which could not possibly be rendered without a good deal of experience. This matter is so important that it demands detailed consideration.

We can see from our illustrations that no painting is a complete copy. In some cases a certain amount of detail is left out; in others certain conventions are deliberately adopted to express what could not be copied. No one attempts to paint all the leaves in a tree or the blades of grass in a field, and several means have been found to suggest a multiplicity of

SKETCHING FROM NATURE

details without attempting to copy them separately. It is not surprising, then, if a beginner selects as a subject a group of trees in a field, he must come to grief. The only reasonable course is to begin with the class of subject which can be most completely rendered by their copying, because the beginner can do nothing but copy. This limits the choice to some kind of building, a house, church, bridge, stile, or some other constructed object of the same nature. But many buildings are open to the same objection as are trees and grass—the walls are filled with thousands of stones, the roofs with thousands of slates or tiles.

We are further limited, therefore, to buildings which do not display thousands of details, such as a plastered cottage. Such severity of restriction should not be needed very long, but is certainly advisable till a few habits of observation and some technical facility have been acquired. A door and window in, say, a half-timbered country cottage could not be bettered as a subject for an initial attempt.

Next comes the matter of the lighting. If the sun is shining straight on to the subject it may lack all interest; on a dull day it may be positively depressing, while at certain times on a sunny day it may be irresistible. These facts seem to be of no concern to most beginners. They start a sketch in the morning when the house is lit from the left and go on painting as the shadows move, disappear, or envelop the whole subject. Or they will prefer a dull day because the light does not materially change, and so lose (in most cases) all that makes the subject worth painting. One sympathizes with the reason given: that the effect changes faster than the beginner can paint, but there are better ways to deal with the difficulty.

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1. Paint only for a short time on each subject and resume on the next sunny day.
2. Make a black-and-white study of the tone and write descriptions of the colour, paint at home from memory, and revise later on the spot.
3. Choose a subject so simple that, after a few attempts, it can be painted in an hour.

Anyway, do not pretend that dull days are more beautiful than sunny ones in order to make an excuse to dodge difficulties, and do not be influenced to shirk the struggles with imitation, by dashing on summary blots and splashes which may serve the purposes of some professional painters. Theirs is a kind of shorthand note into which they can read the rest. They may need but a few of the facts before them and do not waste time drawing what they do not intend to use. When they want detail they draw it with great thoroughness—when they don't want it they leave it out. But the beginner's purpose is to learn to paint and by experience to find out what he wants. He will not know what to discard before sketching until he has discarded after sketching. Hence the advice that he should choose subjects in early attempts which he can paint most thoroughly.

Gradually he will discover how the nature of the materials will help him to suggest masses of detail without actually drawing every one. For instance, rather dry colour dragged across paper with a coarse surface will leave a large number of tiny holes. Many painters make much use of this characteristic when painting the edges of trees. Devices of this kind may be beneficial or dangerous, according to circumstances. If it is adopted because the student has arrived at that stage when he has a real need for it, well and good, but if he adopts it because

SKETCHING FROM NATURE

he has seen it in the sketches of the more experienced before he has done enough sketching to have generated the need, he is trying to skip the necessary practice and training.

Of one thing he can be perfectly certain. If he comes home without an accurate drawing his charmingly suggestive blobs of colour will be revealed as a snare and a delusion as soon as he begins to paint the picture.

Above all, do not hesitate to paint the same subject two or three or four times if by so doing you can get more and more out of it, or, rather, put more and more into it. Flitting from subject to subject, filling sketch-books with indeterminate scribbles and splashes, may probably be exciting but it is certainly wasteful and degenerating. No one can write an intelligible shorthand till he knows the corresponding longhand.

In short be thorough. True freedom comes with knowledge: without it, never.

The preliminary practice recommended in Chapter I will probably encourage a desire to do as much as possible with a few simple flat or gradated washes. This, at any rate, was one of the reasons for recommending the practice. For the one fact about Nature which seems hardest to learn is its simplicity. The beginner always exaggerates the distinctions, especially of tone—makes lights lighter, darks darker, and often makes marked differences where there are little or none at all. So, although it is seldom wise to lay down a hard-and-fast rule, the beginner will seldom regret getting as much as possible into the first few large washes and leaving himself only a few touches to complete the sketch. If evidence is needed several of our illustrations supply eloquent examples.

There are many occasions when effects are so fleeting that

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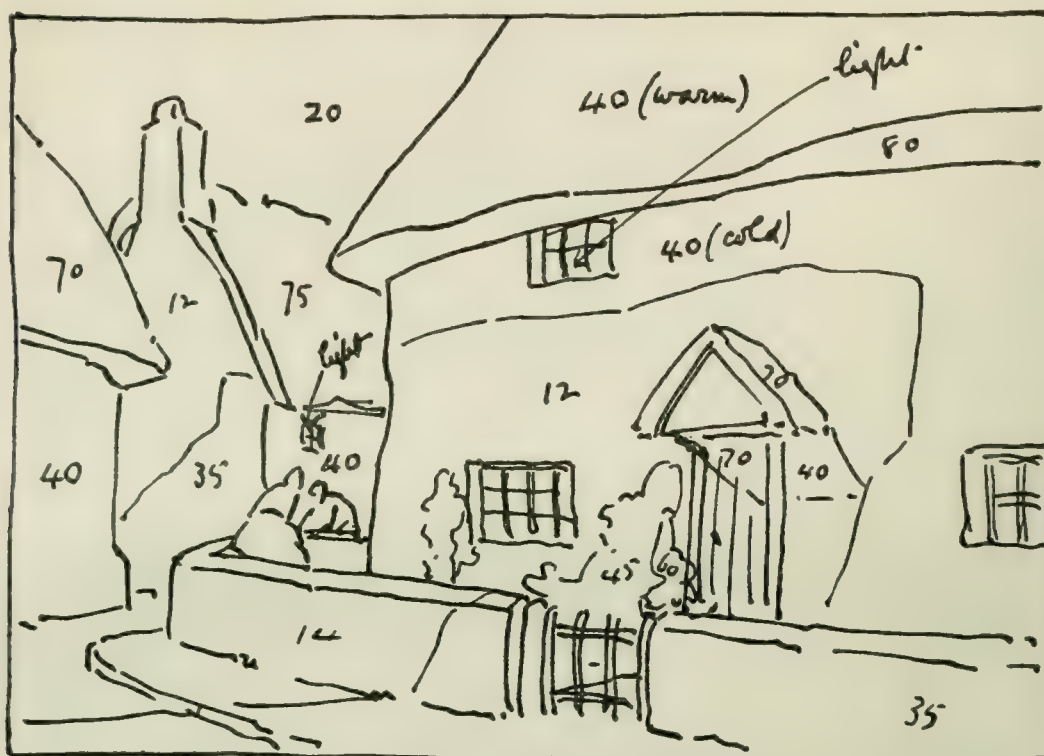


FIG. 6

nothing more can be done than to dash down a few lines. The effect has gone before the tones and colours could be rendered by the swiftest expert. In such cases one has to trust to memory or to adopt some means of verbal description. My own method is more simple and systematic than any other I have met with, and should be helpful to anyone who cares to go through the necessary preparation. For describing tones I call white 0, black 100, and middle-grey, 50. This gives a sufficient range by which to number most tones as accurately as I can see them. Fig. 6 is an example of a compulsorily quick note, as it had to be done in a short interval when clouds were not obscuring

SKETCHING FROM NATURE

the moon. There was no time to do more than draw a few outlines and indicate the main tones by numbers. Fig. 7 is a study which was made soon afterwards, before the memory of essential details had vanished. Several slight alterations in form happened, so to speak, of their own accord. But the tones seemed so exactly right as to call for no change.

This method is a common one for describing tones, but my application of the same principle to the description of colour is, so far as I know, unusual. It arose naturally out of conclusions resulting from the study of colour harmony, and could be adopted only after practical acquaintance with three colour charts made in the following way.

Select the purest approximations in pigments to twelve colours—red, red-orange, orange, yellow-orange, yellow, yellow-green, green, blue-green, blue, blue-violet, violet and red-violet. Paint a long strip of paper (say 12 in. by 1 in.) with each colour, making the colour pure across the middle, gradating upwards with water to almost white and downwards with black pigment till it is almost black. This will give all the tints and shades of the hues. By treating the twelve selected colours in this way probably half of the paintable colours in Nature can be produced.

For the next chart paint the upper half of each of the same twelve hues, and when quite dry cover each with a wash of black, exceedingly faint at the top and gradating to about middle-grey at the bottom. This will give many of the greyed hues, which are actually shades of tints. For the third chart paint twelve strips with similar gradated washes of grey, adding in each case a touch of one of the twelve hues. When these three charts have been memorized almost any colour in Nature can be

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described by a number and one or two words, such as "blue-green 5," "greyed-red 16," "orange-grey 20."

I am not advocating the painting of all pictures with those pigments, because some are not permanent. Most of the colours can be made by the mixture of permanent pigments and without using black.

The purpose of my charts is to get a systematic arrangement of colours for the purposes of nomenclature and as an aid to memorizing. But I have found that by using a few permanent hues and black a more harmonious result can be obtained than by including all the colours in the box in one picture. The result could seldom be a near approach to realism, but it is more likely to be a decorative whole. I believe that the knowledge gained by the painting of these three charts would be of incalculable service to every thoughtful artist, not only as a means of quick sketching but more as the basis of an education in seeing, and most of all as a foundation for the construction of a series of inevitable colour harmonies. Some examples of the painted strips are reproduced in the second edition of *The Technique of Water-Colour Painting*.



FIG. 7

(510)

Anna Airy, R.I., R.E., R.O.I.

AS versatile as she is distinguished, Miss Airy is equally at home with oils, water-colours, pastel, and etching. All her work is noted for its fine draughtsmanship and command over the medium she is using; but as she acknowledges the specific characteristics of each there is no superficial likeness between them. So while her oils are forceful and brilliant her water-colours are limpid and delicate. But whatever the medium there is the same thoroughness born of unrelenting study allied to deep sensitiveness.

Miss Airy's confessions are frank but much exaggerated, and her opinions are delightfully provocative. One would like to stage a debate between her and Mr. Cecil Hunt! She writes—

“Water-colour is a vice; but it is far, far better to do water-colour and repent than never to have done water-colour at all!

“The evanescent subtlety of the medium leads one on—more often than not into difficulties unforeseen—but that is one's own fault, and the moments when ‘all goes right and nothing goes wrong’ (remembering in my own case two, up to date) are worth it all. Certain types of subject seem to be pre-eminently ‘water-colourish’ and others are not, and I feel that one should be very careful in the choice of subject if a successful result is to be obtained. Tone is a pitfall in more ways than one. Truth, sweet Truth, in the relation of one tone to another throughout the work is, in my estimation, a desirable necessity, but the work may result in a much higher key than the actual scene it depicts without losing quality. It

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may even gain it. Freshness of the first vision is the main object. Writing from my own inexperience, I think, despite the brilliant results of many accomplished aquarellists, that clear water-colour with the high lights left—not put in with body-colour—is the true aim of the art. Water-colour is, by the transparency of the medium, dependent upon the white paper below for its brilliance, and recognition of that essential fact, in my opinion, alone produces true mastery of the medium; but so much wonderfully clever work contravening this suggestion is being done by others that one can but humbly mention one's own method and go on producing, in the hope, by no means sure or certain, of attaining an ideal. 'Accent' is an important adjunct in the construction of the picture, especially among painters of to-day. I write as one recognizing a fact but not having attained it; nevertheless I believe that the fresh sincerity of Cotman, De Wint, and many of the older exponents is worth, and ever will be worth, much of the astonishing 'cleverness' of the present time."

Her method of painting a water-colour would discourage all who do not enjoy hard work. She does not begin the final picture until she has decided by previous experiments exactly what she will do. This often involves long and detailed preparation. Sometimes she makes a preliminary study of the whole subject containing much more matter than she intends to use. Then as she works at the study she decides what can best be emphasized, subdued, or eliminated. This she finds to be the swiftest method, for her, because it is the surest; it does away with all hesitation and the possibility of having to make corrections which might take from a water-colour one of its chief charms if not spoil it altogether.

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PLATE II

Anna Airy

A HANG OF PLUMS

(Exhibited at the Royal Institute of Water-Colour Painters)

ANNA AIRY, R.I., R.E., R.O.I.

She has no tricks. Her technique is "the good old way": to begin with the large faint washes and gradually work up to the darkest and most emphatic touches. In every part and at every stage of the picture she tries to be as direct as possible without washing, scrubbing, scratching, or any other means of alteration. Exceptions are occasionally inevitable, as in the realistic treatment of the human figure. In "Chill November" (Plate I) some parts of the figure have been softened by washing with clean water and a rather hard brush to suggest the softness of flesh against the crispness of trees, grass and drapery. Otherwise almost every stroke in the picture is clear and sharp, with little or no gradation.

At first sight this picture appears to be as wayward as Nature itself, but all attempts to alter the arrangement will prove that the construction is impeccable. Take away a vertical strip containing the tree on the left; immediately the figure seems to fall out on the left of the picture and the drapery to fall out at the right. Or substitute a smaller tree, and the lack of balance is painful. Or let the central tree lean to the left instead of to the right and it will combine with the similar lean of the figure and make the whole composition topple. Part of the design is based on radiating lines from the feet of the figure up the central tree, where it spreads into further radiations; up by the dark touches on the bank to the left tree; and, although there is no definite guide, we cannot help following another imaginary line up to the tiny tree on the right. The loss of this tree, then, would seriously disturb the balance.

Now look at the top edge of the drapery. Follow its main sweep up the tree. The whole movement is a beautiful curve giving exquisite pleasure to the beholder. There are many

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other delicately suggested "lines of continuity," as Ruskin called them. The artist did not work them out beforehand. She did better: she painted them because she could not help making a beautiful rhythmic pattern.

In her other picture, "A Hang of Plums" (Plate II), the method is slightly different because the treatment is more deliberately decorative. The painting commenced with a pale warm wash over the whole surface of the paper except the horizontal line of light. Then the few parts where the bluer plums were to be painted were washed quite clean. The painting was done in two clearly marked stages. In the first the plums received the lighter and more gradated washes but without any softening at the edges. The stems and the paler leaves were laid in with flat or slightly varied colours, again with sharp edges. In the second stage the plums were completed with well-defined cold shadows; the darker leaves and the shaded parts of the stems were painted also with hard edges. Finally a few densely dark touches completed the picture, except for the signature, which is of great decorative value. The most striking characteristics of the picture are (1) the delightful arrangement, formal but not unnatural, and (2) the definite treatment, also formal but not conventional. In many of her flower and fruit pieces Miss Airy uses an ink outline with a little shading. This gives the picture a slightly more decorative appearance and enhances the brilliance of the colour.

R. Anning Bell, LL.D., R.A., R.W.S.

MR. ANNING BELL is far famed for his impressive decorations in association with ecclesiastical architecture—mosaics, stained glass, and coloured bas-reliefs. He is, however, a master of other mediums, including that of water-colour. His large picture, "Christ and the Children" (Plate III), occupied the place of honour at the autumn exhibition of the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours in 1929.

Apart from other qualities, his pictures are particularly interesting as evidences of the mental attitude which marks the artist-craftsman. Working conspicuously in materials which impose considerable limitations, he grows to think in the terms of those materials. The pictorial treatment is so largely influenced by those limitations as to modify the formation of his aesthetic standards. Mosaic compels simplicity of design; stained glass demands recognition of the lead ties. To the true artist such limitations are not impediments, because he accepts the conditions and works in harmony with them. These experiences have given to all Mr. Bell's pictures a simple and austere dignity tempered by his natural delicate fancy. The conceptions are clear; the patterns are strongly knit; the colour always emphasizes the design.

Mr. Bell's short description of the evolution of his two pictures is an illuminating record of how things happen in a freely receptive and experienced artist's mind. He writes—

"The drawing of 'Christ and the Children' was made as the preliminary cartoon for the oil painting carried out from

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it with very slight alterations. As is natural for such a purpose, it is drawn in chalk and charcoal, with washes of colour, superimposed in most cases, though occasionally worked over again in chalk.

"The water-colour, 'Exeunt Omnes,' began as a study of one of the garden fronts of the Villa Fiorentina at Cap Ferrat, but as it looked so much like a stage setting some sort of fantastic figures seemed called for. So 'Exeunt Omnes,' an incident in a non-existing play, suggested itself. I think the action of the figures tells its own story. I don't think there is anything to talk about in the technique employed."

"Christ and the Children" might almost be a cartoon for stained glass. The strong lines round some of the heads suggest the lead ties. A conventional treatment is necessary for the treatment of a symbolic subject, to obviate the risk of mawkish sentimental realism without detracting from its fundamental truth.

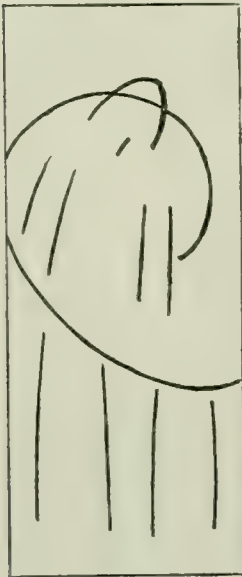


FIG. 8

The design is of unusual interest. Reduced to its simplest terms, it consists of a series of vertical lines of drapery surmounted by a spiral of faces, but subtly varied and cunningly hidden (Fig. 8). The colour is mainly white, black, and greys, lit up with small passages of red, blue, and brown. The whole picture is full of incisive characterization and craftsmanship. Every artist must be delighted by the delicious drawing of the tiny child held up by its mother.

"Exeunt Omnes" is one of the many examples of Professor Bell's consummate use of pure blue. Without these two figures



PLATE III

R. Anning Bell

CHRIST AND THE CHILDREN

(Exhibited at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colour)



R. Anning Bell

“EXEUNT OMNES”
(Exhibited at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colour)

PLATE IV

R. ANNING BELL, LL.D., R.A., R.W.S.

the colour scheme would have been rather hot and perhaps dull, and the design hard, formal, and overweighted at the top. The figures, moving in three different directions, give all the necessary touches of life and interest to the composition. But these prominent and contrasting patches of pure colour would have looked separate and patchy save for the greenish-blue introduced into the painting of the steps and some of the shadows in the building, which carry cool notes into other parts of the picture, complete the colour scheme, and combine serenity with liveliness.

Technically, Mr. Bell's water-colours require no explanations, because he does not employ methods involving mysterious handling or extraordinary dexterity. He is concerned primarily with the far more important matters—conception, design, and colour.

S. J. Lamorna Birch, A.R.A., R.W.S., R.W.A.

THE work of Mr. Lamorna Birch strikes me at once as that of an eager, vigorous personality, who lives the life he paints. He seems to incorporate himself with his surroundings; he is *par excellence* the happy expression of frank and vitalizing joy in Nature. Many years ago I dropped into conversation with a native, beside a trout stream, in our artist's adopted country, and we fell to talking of the painters who were making Cornwall famous. "Yes," he said, in answer to my question about the rising reputation of Mr. Lamorna Birch, "I've *heard* he's a good painter, but (and here he became enthusiastic) I *know* he's a grand fly-fisher!"

Fortunately, his description of his methods are as clear and fresh as his drawings. He writes—

"You ask me for a few notes. I find this very difficult, as I hardly know when beginning a drawing which way I shall do it—all depends on the subject. For instance, if I make a sketch for reproduction in the studio—especially if I need it for painting in oils—I make a careful detailed study in soft pencil, wash over it with the colour I see in the landscape. Sometimes, when a broad effect of light is required, I make my sketch right away with the brush, using colour at its full strength, as near to my subject as I possibly can, because I like to be direct. I cannot say that I have any particular method, though, if I have any particular liking, it is for the good old way—the light tones first, then the half-tones, and finally the darks or shadows. The latter are put in boldly so as to envelop the whole as it were. Sometimes I begin with the paper very wet,

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and work with the colour as dry as possible, so that it will dissolve on the paper. Should the colour look wrong I seldom correct it, but I either put another colour against it, so that the two will harmonize, or simply wash another. I rarely mix colour on the palette, but use it pure, and alter and correct it on the paper. I would say to the would-be water-colourist: Be brave; use plenty of water; don't be afraid of using a good strong dark while the paper is wet; don't niggle; get as much expression and drawing as you possibly can out of each brushful."

In " St. Michael's Mount " (Plate VI) we can see how he has used what he calls the "good old way." On a meticulously careful drawing he painted a faint wash of yellow of the whole surface. Next came a rather stronger wash—pinkish—over the trunks of the trees and on the foreground, and a still stronger yellow-orange colour over most of the foliage. When dry the distance received, first, a very faint warm grey, superimposed by a rather darker or colder grey; faint greys on the sea, warm shadows on some of the tree trunks, a purplish-grey over part of the foreground, and a few other details complete the first stage. Hitherto everything has been careful and deliberate. The picture is ready for rich darks vigorously applied in the way he has described. The result is a completely successful welding of the modern dashing freedom to a basis of classical rendering.

The other example, " Hosking's Barn, Lamorna " (Plate VII), shows the artist in a buoyant mood, in harmony with another class of subject, full of wayward flashes of brilliant light. Here the preliminary drawing is hidden. The first stage is composed of stronger and more varied colours, and the darks are swept on with greater *abandon*. The unique feature is the



PLATE V

ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT
(Exhibited at the Royal Society of Painters in *Water-Colour*s)

S. J. Lamorna Birch



PLATE VI

HOSKING'S BARN

(Exhibited at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colour)

S. J. Lamorna Birch

S. J. LAMORNA BIRCH, A.R.A., R.W.S., R.W.A.

expression of white light in two ways: (1) By dragging dryish colour so that little holes are left, and (2) scraping the paper with a knife. Both plans are temptations to the folly of abuse, and might easily degenerate into trickery. Mr. Lamorna Birch shows his mastery by his control.

Sir George Clausen, R.A., R.W.S., H.R.B.A.

THERE are times when almost every artist is afflicted with a sense of void. The flood of inspiration seems to have dried. He needs a fillip. Some take a rest—fishing, a sea voyage, or a walking tour without a sketch book. Others roam about the picture galleries. A distinguished water-colour painter told me recently that when suffering from one of those visitations of despair he came to London and looked at every water-colour of importance on exhibition. He went from one to another, but no ray descended upon his gloom till he came upon two sketches by Sir George Clausen. Then the light broke through. He could not describe what happened; he just felt able to take up his work again.

Many other painters have had a similar experience. After examining dozens of “clever” pictures painted with dashing confidence, they have begun to tire of superficial brilliance. At that moment there has come into their view something that is fundamentally different. It displays no extraordinary facility; it exhibits no exceptional skill in selection or treatment. But it is evident that a big man has looked at Nature in a big way. What precisely this difference is words cannot convey, but some indication of the explanation may be gathered from a conversation with Sir George that took place while I was turning over a batch of sketches from which the two examples in this book were selected.

Sir George disclaims knowledge of any method. He is more concerned with the expression of a mental attitude than of a way to put colour on paper. For when I asked him whether

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the district he had recently visited was very paintable he replied to the effect that almost anywhere was paintable. He might walk along a road or through a field and see nothing to paint. Then a few clouds would trail across the sky, and there was a picture! But how many would see the picture? Only those who had the picture inside themselves. Like every artist of real experience, Sir George carries many pictures with him, because his study has been penetrating and profound. How untiring has been that study may be gathered from his description of the way to paint a sunrise—

“ I go out half an hour before sunrise and paint till half an hour after sunrise. If the weather is favourable, I do it every morning for, say, a fortnight. By that time I get all I am likely to get out of it. Then I go indoors and paint. Perhaps I produce a picture—and perhaps I don't.” This was not said flippantly or cynically. It was an eloquent indication of his respect for Nature and for his art.

In a few sentences he told me of the change which has taken place in his way of studying Nature on the spot. In his young days he went out with a canvas and worked from Nature, taking it again and again to the same spot till he had done all he could; and he found the result unsatisfactory, because the unity of Nature is missed by working in this way. At one time he sketched in pastel, later in water-colour; now he often does no more than a swift small sketch in pencil, or even a written description. Later Sir George was good enough to write me a description of his present methods and conclusions in the following letter—

“ I try to work as simply and directly as possible in water-colour; whether I am working direct from Nature, or indoors

Sir George Clausen

SUNRISE

PLATE VII





PLATE VIII

EVENING

Sir George Clausen

SIR GEORGE CLAUSEN, R.A., R.W.S., H.R.B.A.

from drawings, I often make a pencil outline from Nature and colour it when I get home, and I find it useful, in such cases, to number the gradations, and to write the colour, on the pencil sketch. In painting I try (though, of course, I can seldom do it), to put the colour on in one wash, without re-touching, for I think there is nothing so beautiful as a clean tint in water-colour that is exactly right. And even if it does not run exactly into the right place (for water-colour is a tricky medium) the quality of the colour has something of the spontaneity and effortless rightness that one finds in Nature itself—a quality that is always lost by labouring and stippling a drawing. It approaches Whistler's excellent definition of 'finish': 'A picture is finished when every trace of the means used to produce the end has disappeared.'

"It seems to me that water-colour painting depends more on simplicity of method than oil-painting, and this means, of course, that you must know pretty well what you want to do before you begin. No doubt this applies to oil-painting too, and the works of the greatest masters owe their fine quality largely to the artist knowing exactly what he wanted to do, and doing it without alteration or fumbling. But it is possible, as we all know, to alter and repaint in oil to an almost unlimited extent—at the cost of quality. It is not, however, possible to do this in water-colour; therefore, some sort of method is necessary. Long ago I was given lessons in water-colour painting by an artist of the old school, and the first thing he taught me was to lay a wash.

"I think that the use of moist colours has probably had something to do with our working in a casual way; the old artists used to grind their colours (cake colours) on a slab, and

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mix their tints, and some, I think, do so even now. But I use moist colours—for convenience—though I do not altogether like them. Something is put into them that shows sometimes rather unpleasantly in the darks.”

His two sketches are fitting illustrations to his letter.

“Sunrise” (Plate VII) is a rapid record of an effect which

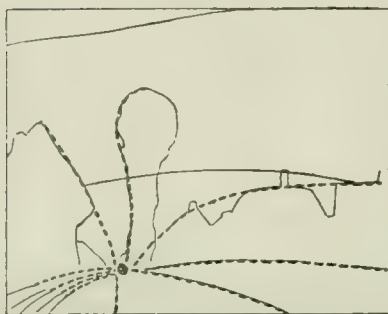


FIG. 9

could not have lasted more than a few minutes—the rising sun breaking through a thin warm cloud and shining on curving road, leaving some thatched cottages and a single tree in strongly marked shadow. Very few people (even among artists) have much practical acquaintance with the unique quali-

ties of sunrise. Those who have will appreciate in this sketch the fine grasp of essential truths.

The composition is one of calm yet concentrated force. As will be seen in the diagram (Fig. 9), several of the main “lines” of the picture converge upon the road as it turns and dips into the valley. Springing up from this point is the straight tree. In contrast with these intense vertical and angular movements are the three great slightly curved lines—the top of the cloud, the crest of the hill, and the edge of the bank above the road—bringing the whole composition into a dignified unity. Try as one will to alter the arrangement, the perfect balance is disturbed.

W. Russell Flint, A.R.A., R.W.S., R.S.A.

ONCE, when he was a very old man, I saw Frith in a dealer's gallery examining a picture by Thaulow, as he repeatedly murmured, "How does the fellow do it?" The same question has been asked by hundreds of competent artists when contemplating the work of Mr. Russell Flint. For he is one of the very few present-day water-colourists whose dazzling technical accomplishments awaken feelings of admiration bordering on despair. So astounding is his command over the medium that it is hard for many to believe that he possesses no secret method of control. Yet the suspicion could not be farther from the truth. I am glad to be able to settle this oft-debated question in Mr. Flint's own words. He writes—

"My own methods are so extremely simple that a few lines should explain the whole matter. Unfortunately, while always simple, I seem to change my method for each picture. My technique consists chiefly of an ample supply of clean water, a few pure, permanent colours, large sable brushes and the whitest, heaviest, and sometimes roughest paper. Also I have one very large hog-hair brush for 'scrubbing,' several flat hog-hair brushes for 'lifting off,' and one or two tiny sables for such details as the fishing rods in 'Passerelle.' I have no technical dodges, so far as I am aware, and have a strong conviction that all such are valueless. My chief object, all the time, is to get the desired result with as little appearance of labour as possible; but I must mention that many a time the most simple-looking drawings have taken lots of time and

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labour. For example, simple skies, which might be taken as the result of one wash, have very often taken five or more washes."

Mr. Flint's palette is surprisingly simple. Cobalt, French ultramarine, pure ultramarine, cerulean, light red, yellow ochre, Indian yellow, burnt sienna, and rose madder, with a very occasional use of Prussian blue, raw sienna, viridian, and vermilion, are all the colours he uses. That, I hope, finally disposes of the suggestion that he is "full of tricks." For although he seems to be able to do what he pleases as if he possessed mysterious or magical powers, the explanation is far more prosaic but no less wonderful. It is simply this: He has acquired exact knowledge of what will happen when pigment, water, and paper come together under any circumstances he determines, and he has learned exactly what to do when those circumstances occur. Continuous, careful, systematic, practical investigation into the possibilities of the medium to express his needs—that is all. The instance he gives—the painting of a simple sky—is an admirable example of how he has built up his methods.

Probably nine artists out of ten, when they want to paint a clear, greyish-blue sky, mix two pools of colour—one for the top and another for the bottom—and try to complete the whole in one wash. If it is not quite even, they wash it down when dry, and paint again, with the same colours diluted, on top of the first. Or they wash off the whole, while wet, and try again. It has not occurred to them that they might get a better result, by an entirely different method such as the following: (1) A faint wash of yellow ochre stronger at the bottom, washed down when dry, (2) a very faint wash of light red slightly stronger at



PLATE IX

PASSERELLE

(In the possession of J. G. Hart, Esq.)
(Exhibited at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours)

W. Russell Flint



PLATE X

WINTER: REHANE

(Exhibited at the Royal Society of Painters in *Water-Colours*)

W. Russell Flint

W. RUSSELL FLINT, A.R.A., R.W.S., R.S.A.

the bottom and washed down when dry, (3) a wash of cobalt stronger at the top and fading to weakness at the bottom. I do not mean to say that Mr. Flint ever works in exactly this manner, but many of his pictures indicate that he has found ways somewhat of the kind as the one just described.

The diversity of his methods was revealed to me when looking at his unfinished pictures, painted out of doors. Some had been done on hot, dry days, and consisted of small washes with hard edges. In others, painted on damp, cool days, various colours had run together, and, to my surprise, a little Chinese white had been added to make the pigment more controllable. It is certain that the same method could not be followed in finishing all the paintings. Some required sharpening, others softening. Yet each, when completed, looked as if painted in the same simple, predetermined way. That is more wonderful than magic!

The outstanding facts of Mr. Flint's career afford some explanation of how he has attained to his astonishing pitch of efficiency. He began as a lithographer for a firm of commercial printers; then turned to illustrating for a famous London weekly; later he illustrated a splendid series of classics, including the *Morte d'Arthur* and the *Canterbury Tales*. In many ways this was an excellent training for a landscape painter. He had to be thorough, to gain great knowledge, to cultivate a fine memory, understand the limitations of reproductive processes, and make the most of them. It is not quite so surprising, therefore, that when confronted with the comparatively simple technical problems and the greater freedom from restrictions in landscape painting, he triumphs.

It is rather ironical that Mr. Flint's hardly-won powers

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should be publicly used to belittle him by those who should (and probably do) know better. Occasionally one reads suggestions that he is "too clever"—an insinuation that his technical brilliance hides deficiencies in the more significant qualities of a picture—vision and design. But his technique is not a cloak: it is a lamp. The critic must be blind (or worse) who is not impressed by the originality and beauty of the conceptions enhanced by the brilliance of the method.

Take, as an example, "Passerelle" (Plate IX). So far as I know, its composition owes nothing to any other picture. Most artists would have failed to see in it a subject for such a delightfully original picture. Just a wall and a few bathers walking on it, part of a nondescript building, and a few rolling clouds; and see what he has made of it! Take out any feature and see how the composition falls to pieces. Without the steadying power of the building it is a mass of spots. Without the arched masses of moving clouds it is insignificant; and with all save one unusual and slightly noticeable feature there would be something lacking; but the introduction of the fishing rods gives the picture a completeness as unexpected as it is effective. The whole conception takes on movement and meaning. The figures become a procession.

If all this is merely cleverness then what more is needed? As a matter of sober fact, the only part of the picture that is technically extraordinary is the sky. The rest is a matter of straightforward washes; and, of course, the white draperies have been washed out. Several highly capable artists have confided to me that they have tried long and hard to get the same softness and strength with that extraordinary cleanness, but have always failed. Only the waste-paper basket has been the richer!

Oswald Garside, R.I., R.C.A., R.B.C.

MR. OSWALD GARSIDE is one of that small class of water-colourists who set everyone wondering how they do it. He can lay a large wash in a few strokes, and give it the appearance of multitudinous details; and by some means, which must be simple when it is known, he can make wet washes meet without flowing into one another, but join with a softness of edges which still retains a suggestion of crispness. No amount of skill alone could achieve such results. Transparent pigment plus water with no additional ingredient will not act that way. Mr. Garside evidently has found other means. He has, like Mr. Cecil Hunt, made many experiments, resulting in a few discoveries which it would not be fair to ask him to divulge in detail. But in response to my request for all the information he cared to give, he has written in the following reply more than might be expected from an innovator—

“ My two water-colours were painted on paper washed with Chinese white and a slight tint of yellow ochre. This was allowed to harden by keeping it for a few weeks in a warm, dry place. The paper was then well soaked, and the painting executed with water to which a little gum-arabic had been added. A touch of ox-gall caused the colour to flow well, and counteracted any tendency to greasiness in the paper. The Chinese white in the paper made it possible to take out any lights afterwards or to wash out any part as required. The resulting surface is one of the most permanent.

“ The picture of Llanrwst Bridge (Plate XI) is painted almost entirely with two colours—cobalt blue and Vandyke

BRITISH WATER-COLOUR PAINTERS OF TO-DAY

brown, used in various proportions and in different depths. The other colours used were: a few touches of burnt sienna in the foreground and others on the figures in the distance.

“ The picture of a Thames barge (Plate XII) in winter was done from pencil sketches and notes as the weather did not permit of working in the open. Apart from the design, the intention was to get the hazy atmosphere and suggest the cold prevailing at the time.”

This is real information, and every reader who is interested in new methods will be indebted to Mr. Garside for his disclosures.

Like many other artists of great experience, most of his sketching is of a summary character. Seldom does he go beyond a small pencil sketch. By a careful cultivation of a naturally tenacious memory he can carry away from a scene most of what he needs, except in occasional cases where the topographical details are of exceptional interest ; and even then he rarely paints in detail on the spot, because his pictures are usually deliberately conceived colour schemes. He is always noting colour arrangements in Nature more than the colour of individual things. Generally a few lines to indicate the composition and a few written notes of the colour scheme are all that he requires, but he makes many *notes* of details, particularly of the effects of moving clouds.

The contents of his sketch books, however, are not so valuable as that which is stored ready for use in his mind. Though he has thousands of sketches he often paints large pictures without referring to a single note. Consequently he is never “ put off ” by those delusive features which it is so hard to leave out, though their inclusion spoils the picture.



PLATE XI

LLANRWST BRIDGE
(Exhibited at the Royal Institute of *Water-Colour Painters*)

Oswald Garside



PLATE XII

THAMES BARGES: BARNES

(Exhibited at the Royal Institute of Water-Colour Painters)

Oswald Garside

OSWALD GARSIDE, R.I., R.C.A., R.B.C.

Mr. Garside is the author of a delightful little book, *Landscape Painting in Water Colour*, in which he reveals many of the fruits of a rich experience.

Two points of unusual interest strike one in considering his work. The first is his use of severely restricted palettes, which is discussed in a future chapter. On this matter he holds the opposite opinion to many artists: he believes that it is better for the student to begin with an unlimited number of colours at his disposal, and restrict as he is able to get the most out of the few. Undoubtedly, there is more to be said for this view than many who have thought less about the matter are apt to suppose.

The other point—his use of Chinese white before commencing to paint the picture—especially the fact that he leaves it to dry for a considerable time before painting over it, should be of considerable practical value to those whose painting suffers from hardness and violence, and put them in Mr. Garside's debt for the information.

The composition of "Llanrwst Bridge" is of unusual interest. Mr. Garside set himself a difficult problem, inseparable from a subject when a high bridge comes straight into the picture from one side so that the top line describes a long and falling curve. He has accentuated the difficulty by making the line of the stones in the foreground fall in the same direction. How to balance the composition is a question he has answered so effectively that to those who have not experienced the difficulty there appears to have been no question.

Mr. Garside's brilliant solution is four-fold: (1) The lean of the clouds in the opposite direction to that of the bridge, (2) the greater lean of the mountain, (3) the tall tree on the

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right, the smaller one at the juncture of the bridge and houses, and the much smaller one in the distance under the arch, are so arranged that the mind's eye travels from one to the other in the same downward direction as the hills and cloud, (4) the accentuation of vertical and horizontal lines which always helps to make a composition firm and steady.

These devices were not deliberately adopted in obedience to copy-book rules, but in response to the dictates of a richly cultivated temperament.

Miss Dorothy Hawksley, R.I.

A PICTURE by Miss Hawksley, in any exhibition, always stands out as a work of distinction. It attracts immediate attention by its pure colour, decorative conception, fine draughtsmanship, and technical excellence. Every aspect of the picture is an evidence that its creator is in complete control. There appears to have been no room for an accident—not even a lucky one! The picture seems to have been thought out deliberately, down to the minutest detail, as if in the preliminary studies every problem was settled beyond possible question. I do not say that such is always so in her actual practice. Things may sometimes happen which were not anticipated, but if such is ever the case the picture affords no hint of the intervention of chance.

Notwithstanding her calm command over subject and treatment, the result is never mechanical. Efficiency does not (it never should) endanger the expression of flights of fancy, because she is in control of the possibility of dangers. An enviable state of mind, will, and technique!

Her two pictures (Plates XIII and XIV) illustrate her favourite (but not her only) method. The design is very simple but not empty. Most of the colours are almost flat. There is a good deal of reliance upon outlines and very little light and shade. The colour is definite but never harsh. The washes are laid on with great precision without the least trace of haste or bungling. Of the conceptions it is useless to write. Either one has the inborn capacity or one hasn't: the capacity can be developed but not created, but the method of painting Miss

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Hawksley explains with admirable clarity in the following extract from a letter—

“ My method is to mix a little tempera paint with the transparent water-colours when putting on a wash, to help it to adhere to the paper when a second wash is painted over it.

“As an illustration I will describe the process I used for ‘ The Bathers ’ (Plate XIV), which was done on ‘ hot-pressed ’ Whatman board. I drew my group of figures, then mixed a quantity of blue wash, adding a little tempera blue. I tilted my drawing slightly and washed on clean water, and while this was still wet I washed on the blue in horizontal strokes, beginning at the top of the paper and let it run down. While it was drying I took a clean brush and wiped out the figures (the outline was visible), and any other part which was to be lighter than the blue. When it was quite dry I laid on another wash in the same way—as far as I can remember, pink—and again wiped out the figures, and so on, gradually building up the tone and colour.

“A landscape I should do in the same way, washing the sky over the whole surface and wiping out anything that is lighter than the sky, and of course any part intended to be painted in a colour which did not contain blue.”

In each of Miss Hawksley’s pictures it will be noted that some of the washes are granular, i.e. are covered with tiny dots of darker colour evenly distributed. Why and how this happens is fully explained in *The Technique of Water-Colour*, and need not be repeated in detail here. Following is a short description of the method, and explains why Miss Hawksley’s procedure produced granular washes.

It is used to obviate the risks of dullness in large flat or slightly graduated washes. Only a few pigments can be induced



PLATE XIII

THE MOTHER—

“She found her daughter laid upon the bed”

(Exhibited at the Royal Academy)

(In the possession of Mrs. Salaman)

Dorothy Hatukley



PLATE XIV

THE BATHERS

Dorothy Hawksley

(Exhibited at the Royal Academy)

(In the possession of H. St. J. Hornby, Esq.)

MISS DOROTHY HAWKSLEY, R.I.

to act in this way, notably cerulean, cobalt, permanent blue, and emerald green; but if one of them is mixed with other colours, in sufficient proportion, the resultant colour will act somewhat in the same manner.

This, in brief, is the method for laying a gradated wash of, say, cobalt. Take a piece of coarse hand-made paper, either strained or stuck on cardboard. Place it at an angle of about 25° with the horizontal. Prepare a large quantity of the colour in a saucer. Use a wide brush that will hold a considerable quantity of colour. Charge the brush fully and paint a wide stroke across the top of the paper. Very quickly add a brushful of water to the wash and make the second stroke slightly overlapping the first. Proceed in this way as far as required. Then, *before any part is dry*, take up the paper and hold it almost vertical for a few moments, then slowly lower it until it becomes horizontal. Then lift the bottom and reverse the position. Repeat the movements till the gradation is perfectly even. Leave it to dry in such a position that the lighter end is slightly uppermost. If this is done correctly much of the water in the wash will run off the paper, leaving small spots of pigment all over the paper at regular distances apart.

In "The Mother" (Plate XIII) the means for securing balance is openly displayed. The vertical lines of the dress saves the figure from appearing to fall forward. The converging lines of the tiles and the direction of the arms draw the eye to the brightest spot—the richly coloured bedclothes—which forms a centre of balance for the whole picture as precisely the right spot from which we are drawn to look up to the face, and then to other parts of the picture in pleasantly ordered movements.

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The tones and colours are just as deliberately designed. The dark vertical masses on the left exactly balance the bed on the right and the figure is a balancing centre of tone. Then take the colour. In the main it is a composition of blue and red. The pure red on the bedclothes is the focus of warmth, the tiles are darkened red, the dress is darkened red slightly modified by blue. The bluish-black hair of the mother is the focus of cold colours. Around are arranged the blues and greyish-blues, subtly varied in form, tone, and colour.

Sir Charles Holmes, K.C.V.O., R.W.S.

SIR CHARLES HOLMES is one of the most refreshing personalities in British art, and as unlike the popular conception of an artist as could be imagined. His life has been so crowded with diverse activities that he has seldom spent a whole week at a time in his studio. His sketching has consisted of short trips snatched in intervals between writing, lecturing, and continuous work at the National Gallery and elsewhere.

To most artists this lack of continuity would have had the effect of reducing their painting to occasional desultory sketching for recreation, but to Sir Charles Holmes the very lack of time seems to have acted as a salutary spur. He has had to make quick decisions, to seize upon significance, and express it in a few swift strokes. How far his water-colours have been modified in style by these unusual circumstances it is impossible to say; probably little. For his pictures reflect his personality—decisive and adventurous while scholarly and controlled. Speed is not marred by haste. He does not meander: to him the shortest way is the best way.

Fortunately for the present purpose, he can analyse his own mental processes, and say in so many words why he does what he does. In a long and (for me, at any rate) an enjoyably stimulating interview, he seemed to be able to explain the cause of his every action and reaction. Such a type of mind, as informative as it is uncommon among artists, is the only authoritative medium between the painter and the public, because its possessors are the only ones who can probe most deeply into the workings of the aesthetic emotion.

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Certainly his self-analysis was extraordinarily illuminating, throwing a clear light upon mental processes most artists would think inexplicable. His adoption of limited colour schemes was partly due to his study of Oriental art. His frequent painting of industrial subjects and of great storm clouds rolling up behind cold mountains received its stimulus when, as a boy at school in the south, he spent his holidays in North Lancashire and Cumberland. His instinct for simplified, powerful rendering was awakened by a sudden rush of realization when looking at one of Daumier's masterpieces.

His technical methods have been modified by the constant necessity for dropping his painting and turning to other matters. Limitations of time demanded a method of sketching so rapid that several subjects could be grasped in a single day. A few lines in pencil, written notes of general effects, and sometimes a wash to render local colour have had to suffice. The rest was left to memory. His first concern is with what he calls "the bare bones of the design," but not so much at the expense of topography as is generally supposed. "Every picture," he says, "is a picture of a place." Free of sentimentality, he never invests with old age that which is young. If, for example, one of two adjoining buildings is distorted by Time and the other is fresh from the builder, he emphasizes rather than attempts to obliterate the distinctions.

Most of the questions relating to method which generally occupy so much attention—paper, technique, palette, and the like—he regards as of minor importance. He uses several kinds of paper, but rather prefers a smooth surface, so that, in his own expressive phrase, he can more readily "shape a wash."

The dreamy and ruminative may admire and perhaps envy



PLATE XV

MORNING: TAYSIDE
(Exhibited at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colour)

Sir Charles Holmes

SIR CHARLES HOLMES, K.C.V.O., R.W.S.

the power to summarize essentials in few strokes. But they emulate at their peril; they must tread a slower, measured course. Speed is for the speedy; deliberation for the deliberate.

The two reproductions of his work are fine examples of the power and significance with which he can invest subjects in which most artists would see no artistic possibilities—or fly for shelter! Lacking appropriate skies, both would be of little interest, but in each case the sense of inevitable fitness has welded sky and land into a single whole, so that we are conscious of one great sweeping movement.

In “Morning: Tayside” (Plate XV), the “bare bones of the design” are a pair of almost parallel rhythmic curves that sweep from the stream in the foreground up the hill between the woods, and rush irresistibly across the rising sun out of the top of the picture. Striking into the dark cloud is another pointed one echoed in direction by several others. All this compelling fury of the elements would be insupportable but for the horizontal belt of hillside which introduces a note of repose. It is a masterly example of how a frankly expressed design can be used to reveal an overmastering emotion.

I doubt whether it would be possible to get the same tempestuous effect in water-colour by a more careful and deliberate treatment. Stopping to think would be fatal. Every stroke must flow swiftly from the brush in response to an uprush of feeling. The conception must be clear: the rest simply happens.

It is easy to see why, in this mood, Sir Charles has no imitators: painting of this character cannot be done by merely taking thought as to how lines shall go: the thing must come suddenly and whole from an imagination of concentrated and co-ordinated vigour.

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It must not be implied, however, that the power of swift and sure expression was not preceded by much careful thought. Sir Charles has built up his methods by being what he calls "a slow, laborious workman." Facility and mastery do not come, ready-made, as gifts from heaven.

Cecil A. Hunt, R.W.S., V.P.R.W.S.

UNUSUAL interest was excited, several years ago, by the appearance at London exhibitions of an innovator among water-colour painters. The pictures were painted on what was generally considered the most unsuitable paper, viz., Bristol board. Apparently they were done very quickly with colours that were not quite transparent; but the most surprising feature was the production of light lines by the use of the other end of the brush! Here, evidently, was an original painter who had thrown tradition aside and was beginning to build up an entirely new method on a fresh foundation; and that is what Mr. Cecil Hunt has done. To-day his large pictures, swept on to the paper in two or three hours, brilliant in colour, powerful in design, and often suggesting a wealth of detail, challenge every established method.

So alluring was the spontaneity which seemed to spring inevitably from the new technique that many attempts have been made to imitate it, but Mr. Hunt still stands alone with his discoveries. Year by year he has advanced along a logical course as his investigations have borne fresh fruit, and the would-be imitators are left behind with a series of failures and a painful conviction that they have not probed Mr. Hunt's secrets.

Mr. Hunt has never fully explained how he manages, with apparent ease, to achieve his amazing virtuosity, nor would one care to inquire; and it is improbable that his work could be rivalled even if he were to demonstrate his methods. For, as in the case of Mr. Russell Flint, the bulk of the explanation is the possession not of secrets but of power; and such powers belong

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to few. But Mr. Hunt has been generous in his hints, and I am able, with his permission, to tell more than most discoverers would care to reveal.

The first fact is far from encouraging. His is a hit-or-miss method, with more misses than hits! "Most of my efforts," he writes, "end in the waste-paper basket." When, however, the available information about his method is considered one is surprised that the proportion of hits is so high.

This, in the main, is his method—

His sketches are made in pencil with written notes regarding colour, etc., generally in a few minutes. Laborious paintings on the spot serve him no purpose, as much of what he finally paints was not there! Often he makes several sketches of the same subject from slightly different points of view. Out of them grows the composition in the studio, the result of many experiments. When the picture is clear in his mind, it is drawn, generally on hand-made paper, which is immersed in water until soaked. The paper is then laid on a sheet of zinc, which keeps it wet. At first it is so wet that the colour flows in all directions; when it is practically dry the clearest line can be drawn with the finest brush. Between these two states are an infinite number of intermediate states, and the problem is what to do when the paper is in any given state of dampness. When the paper is perfectly dry the picture must be finished, except in details, without loss of spontaneity. By Mr. Hunt's method there can be no alterations. Hit or miss!

With transparent water-colour the effects he produces would be out of the question, especially in the earlier stages. Some more controllable medium than undiluted water must be used. After many experiments, e.g. with paste and glycerine, Mr.



PLATE XVII

VIXEN TOR

Cecil A. Hunt

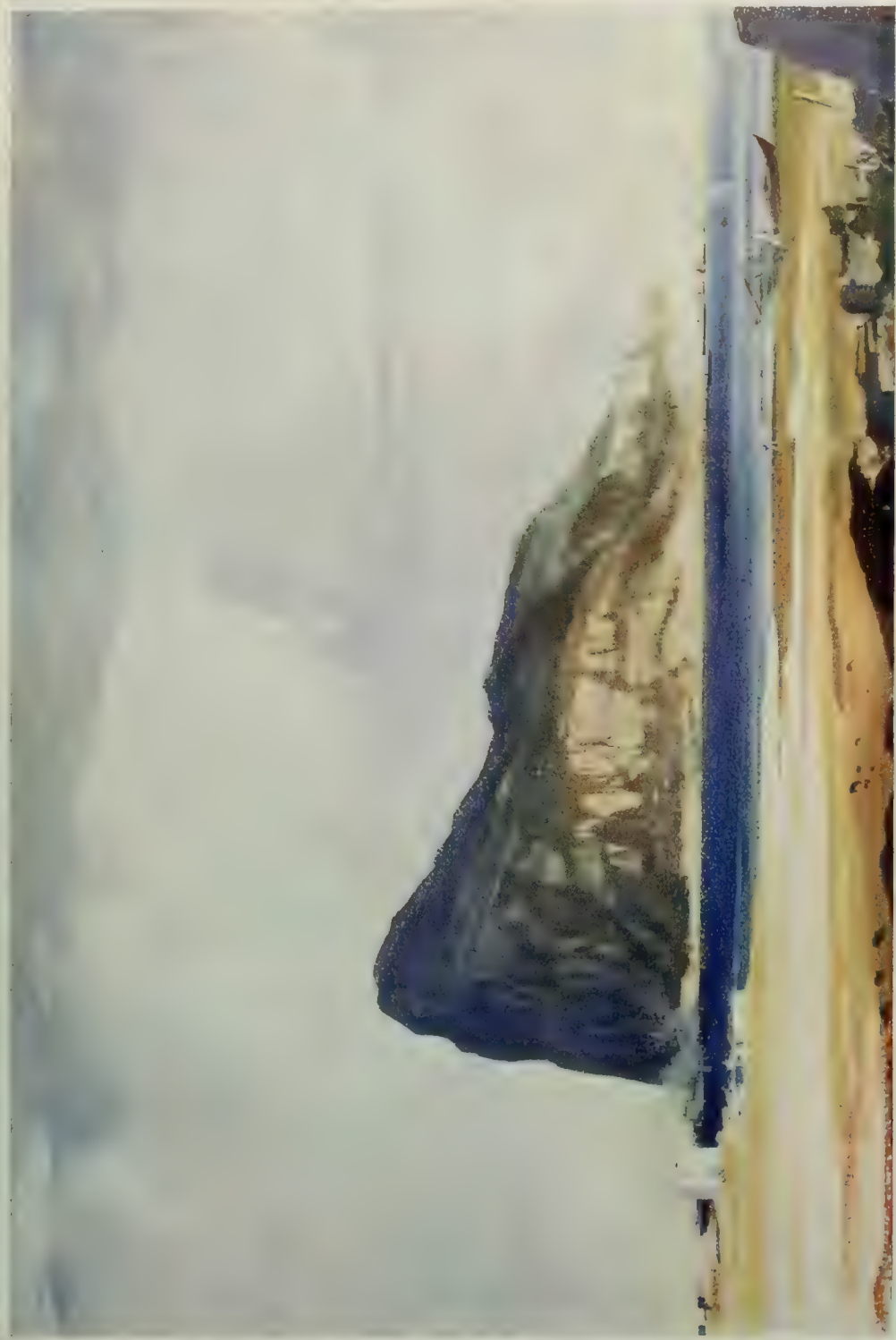
Cecil A. Hunt

GIBRALTAR

(Exhibited at the Royal Academy)

(In the possession of D. D. Reid, Esq., M.P.)

PLATE XVIII



CECIL A. HUNT, R.W.S., V.P.R.W.S.

Hunt selected tempera. Those who have used it know that it is considerably lighter when dry than when applied, and that some colours change more than others. As if this were not sufficiently difficult, Mr. Hunt uses transparent colours *with* the tempera in the same picture! And that is not the only complication. Painters in tempera generally use most white in the lightest parts, painting fairly solidly. Mr. Hunt does exactly the opposite. He often paints the darks solidly with tempera and the lights thinly, so that the paper shows through. By "tempera" I mean the pigments in tubes supplied by the artists' colourman.

Needless to say, any attempt at realistic rendering would mean certain failure. It could not be done in the necessarily limited time. Colour schemes must be restricted, masses simple, details few. In Mr. Hunt's hands these limitations are turned into advantages, giving his pictures a fine impressive dignity. At the same time his methods make possible effects that could hardly be got in any other way. The atmospheric nature of the parts containing much white, contrasted with the transparence of other passages, give to his pictures a fascinating quality that is unique in the whole history of water-colour.

This, then, is the method with which Mr. Hunt's name is generally associated, but he does not use it exclusively. Sometimes he incorporates it with orthodox ways of painting, as the occasion and the mood direct.

In each sumptuous annual publication of the Old Water Colour Society's Club, one of the members writes "In Praise of Water Colour." Mr. Hunt's contribution in the 1928-9 volume is a spirited defence of adventure, as the following quotations show—

"If we regard each problem we tackle as a pictorial adventure we may add something—even though it be a trifle—to the

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technique of the art, and to reveal some beauty of manipulation hitherto unrecorded.

“ The water-colour painter who aims at strength and richness of effect may quietly disregard the common gibe that he is showing no respect for his medium.

“ There is room for the exponents of every method.

“ Diverse effects are obtained by painting on wet, damp, or dry surfaces, by keeping the paper flat, or on a slope, by working with sable or hog brushes, by using the sponge, razor, or the palette knife for removing colour.

“ Body colour has been employed by many great artists with strikingly successful results, but as a rule it would seem that the happiest way of using it is in conjunction and contrast with transparent colour, but not actually mixed with it. By this means one secures a gain in vitality owing, it may be, to the inequalities of texture and a peculiar vibrancy of effect quite beyond that obtainable from purely transparent colour. To use it, however, in time of trouble, for patching and concealing defects, is to court disaster.”

None of Mr. Hunt's pictures could better illustrate his technical methods than “ Vixen Tor ” (Plate XVII). Here (now that we have been told) we can see that transparent colour has been used in the sky, and a generous proportion of white in the distant hills. In the foreground we note that the lights on the rocks have been obtained by scraping, and the grasses have been deftly picked out by the use of some hard, sharp tool.

I doubt whether more than a few could honestly say they are drawn by natural instinct to paint in this manner. The others might well remember that if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, it is not the way to paint sincere pictures.

Dame Laura Knight, D.B.E., A.R.A., R.W.S., R.W.A., A.R.E.

DURING the whole of her career Dame Laura Knight has startled the world by the intensity of her pictures. At first she painted glowing realizations of blazing sunlight on the Cornish coast. Then, like a few other painters who helped to make Cornwall famous, she came to London and set out to interpret phases of its artificial brilliance. Always keeping abreast of the best in every modern movement, she adapted her style to the new conditions and produced a series of water-colours of the Russian ballet no less striking than those of the utterly different scenes she had left behind. She abandoned any attempt at naturalistic rendering, and brought her technical methods into harmony with the new needs ; and it would seem as if out of these experiences grew changed convictions about the place and purpose of water-colour. For while her methods in oils have gradually evolved with the growth of deeper conceptions, the change in her water-colour method was almost sudden and complete. Formerly she had used both mediums for much the same purpose, representing as fully in one as in the other ; but in studying the whirling movements on the stage she was forced to rely upon lightning sketches of essentials which could not possibly be highly detailed. To these she added colour consistently, that is, with the same swiftness of wash as of line. Finding that by this summary method (a kind of inspired shorthand) she could express the inwardness of the subjects most vividly, she concluded that for her the prime reason for using water-colour is not to encroach upon the province of oils, but to take the fullest advantage of what

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water-colour can be most readily made to do, viz., to enhance the value of the drawing, but not to take its place. In a word, water-colour is for the sketch and oils for the fuller plastic statement.

But her aim should not be confounded with that of the old water-colour masters or with that of painters such as Mr. Rushbury. Theirs are generally highly detailed drawings reinforced with a few washes of rather pale colour. On the contrary, she often uses the fullest range of light and shade and the greatest brilliance of colour. There is another notable difference. Mr. Rushbury's colour is always transparent, and the paper wholly or nearly white. Dame Laura Knight makes considerable use of body colour, sometimes on toned paper in order to achieve the full gamut of both tone and colour.

The two pictures reproduced here are of the same class of subject, but differ in treatment and effect. The first, "In the Wings" (Plate XIX), is a scene familiar to all who are acquainted with life "behind the scenes," where the professional dancers and acrobats take every opportunity to keep their leg muscles in trim immediately before the performance. The artist's interest, however, was in the delightful juxtaposition of the purplish-red dress and the brilliant green background, and in the contrast between the flat dark masses and the gaily-patterned backcloth. And more subtly appealing was the delicate relationship between the colour of the flesh and the floor.

The other, "Russian Ballet—Behind the Scenes" (Plate XX), is a more consciously constructed picture—a triumph of dignified design. A vertical band of dark on each side, with the brightest light shining out from behind the largest passage of dark. From this light radiates the shadows on the wall which help to focus



PLATE XIX

IN THE WINGS

Dame Laura Knight



PLATE XX

THE RUSSIAN BALLET—BEHIND THE SCENES

Dame Laura Knight

DAME LAURA KNIGHT, D.B.E., A.R.A., R.W.S., A.R.E.

the attention on the principal point. Two pairs of dark figures contrast with two pairs of light figures. A line drawn along the heads of all the figures on the ground is delightfully undulating. Contrasting with this rhythmic curve are the straight lines of the ladder which form the centre of the composition of lines. A fine touch of variety is given by the almost flat curtain on the left and the positively painted folds on the other curtain. The vagueness of the figures manipulating the lights conveys a sense of the third dimension and increases the sense of height expressed by the many upright lines.

The colour is simple and strong. In the main it is composed of red, green, and black, with a little yellow and orange. The dark purplish-red figure is almost repeated, but with a slight variation in colour, by the dark red curtain, which brings into harmony the light and bright reds on the other dresses. Varied greys modify most of the surface, throwing into prominence the effect of the invisible illuminant behind the curtain.

The whole scheme is reticent: there is no attempt to be naturalistic because the intention is to produce an ordered, balanced, varied, rhythmic arrangement of line, mass, and colour; and the intention is brilliantly carried out.

No technical method could be more simple and direct. The figures are outlined in Indian ink, and most of the light and shade is in black and white. All that was unnecessary for the general effect and the decorative purpose is abandoned. This is done without descending to "distortion" (of which so much has been heard in recent years) but by selection, emphasis, and subordination—quite different and wholly defensible methods. It is one thing to dispense with the delicate half-tones in a face: it is another thing to double the length of a nose.

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This illustration indicates Dame Laura Knight's position: she simplifies and arranges with freedom but she does not need to distort in order to create a fine design.

What the next stage in her progress will be cannot be guessed; but that there will be successive stages the following extract from one of her letters leaves no doubt. She writes—

“ My only motive in painting is that I cannot help doing it. The desire to produce pictures drives me on to spoil canvas and paper, trying to plumb the depths of understanding of the subject which has produced the desire, and to react to such understanding in the most simple and expressive fashion. I am always falling short and hoping for clearer insight and better craft next time.”

Percy Lancaster, R.I., A.R.E., R.C.A., R.B.C.

TO describe the work of Mr. Lancaster is a comparatively simple matter because he is able to say precisely what he wants to do and how he proceeds to do it. And he can do it according to schedule. As the two examples of his pictures testify, he is a model of controlled ability applied to definite conceptions. What is more surprising is that this masterly precision does not degenerate into mechanical mannerism.

To him a picture is the complete expression of an idea, and is generally present in his mind in a finished state before he puts a stroke on paper. This highly developed mental organization is easily explained: he began his professional career as an architect and is still a consultant to the firm with which he practised. Also he is an etcher. There is no haziness in his work because there is no doubt in his mind. He has no place for hesitating tentativeness often erroneously described as "poetical" or as "mystery." He goes out deliberately to get material—and he gets it. His sketching has no admixture of idle loafing. He has no use for formless scribbles in pencil or blotty dabs of colour. He draws with absolute precision, often with a pen. Sometimes he lays a few washes over his drawing; at other times he relies entirely on a splendidly efficient memory.

His pictures are seldom topographical, but combinations of many notes drawn from many sources. With a host of details firmly fixed in his mind to be drawn upon at will, he is able to clothe his conceptions with ease. His work has passed through

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definitely marked evolutions, becoming year by year more ordered and scholarly. He is an experimentalist, but does not yield to the current weakness to exhibit his experiments. That is why his methods have sometimes appeared to change suddenly.

The two examples of his work shown here illustrate two aspects of his most recent style. In one respect both are similar—each is designed with masterly power and painted with absolute certainty.

“The Sand Cart” (Plate XXI) is painted on heavy, coarse, pure white Whitman’s paper, which in many places is left untouched. The effect is not “papery,” because the uneven surface gives an effect of varied pale grey. Every wash is painted directly and in most cases practically flat. The stages through which the picture has passed can easily be seen: firstly, a varied wash of blue and grey over the sky, leaving the edges of the clouds sharply defined, and an almost flat wash of pale yellowish colour over the whole of the sand; secondly, pale washes of warm grey over the clouds without softening any edges, and varied washes of cold brownish colour over most of the sand, horse, and cart; thirdly, a wash (rather darker than the darkest part of the sky) over the sea, leaving the waves white; lastly, sharp touches, subtly varied in colour on different parts of the foreground. Every stroke is unhesitating, direct, precise, and telling.

The architect is apparent, too, in the carefully thought-out design. It is full of purposeful arrangement—readily observable to the experienced painter but not, perhaps, to the student and amateur. How aptly the whole composition has been put together can be seen in the analytical diagram (Fig. 10), where the



PLATE XXI

THE SAND CART
(Purchased by the Bury Art Gallery)

Percy Lancaster



PLATE XXII

MOUNTAIN PASTORAL

Percy Lancaster

PERCY LANCASTER, R.I., A.R.E., R.C.A., R.B.C.

main "lines" of the design are shown. First of all there is the great sweep running from the right-hand bottom corner along the cart and horse right up the principal cloud (*A*). Opposed to it is a long curve (*B*), in a horizontal direction, echoed and emphasized by another line (*C*). All these lines meet at the principal point in the picture—the horse—which thus

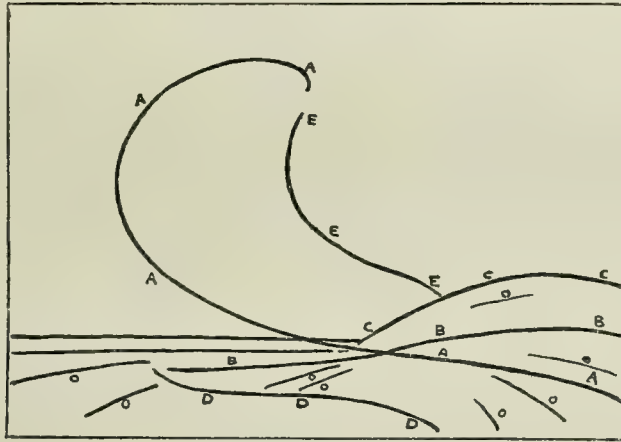


FIG. 10

forms a centre of radiation, and many other lines and touches (*O*) on the foreground strengthen the effect. This arrangement of swirling curves would have been disturbing in their vigour but for the long horizontal line of the horizon repeated in the waves and the shore. But more subtle is the repetition of the shape of the immediate foreground (*D*) with that of the principal cloud (*E*). There is a fine touch of restraint in the placing of the horse. Most artists would have been tempted to place the dark head in powerful contrast against the sunlit sand, thus giving it too great prominence and lessening the interest of the deftly-drawn figures. All these details of design were not, of course, deliberately conceived in cold blood, or the effect would

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certainly have been mechanical. The whole picture looks spontaneous because Mr. Lancaster's study, experience, and convictions have become part of himself, and so the composition happens.

His other picture, "Mountain Pastoral" (Plate XXII), is a contrast in subject, demanding a different outlook. Instead of the dancing clouds and stirring breezes, there is dignity and stillness. The treatment is more simple and severe—almost sombre. The mountains are expressed in flat washes. The foreground is simplified and the colour scheme is restrained. Cover the sky and the rest is undoubtedly dull. But, to quote Sir George Clausen, "the sky makes the picture." The pinkish clouds against their warm greenish background give to the land an added haze of grey, and brings the whole colour scheme into harmony. There is, in the shading of the clouds, a fascinating delicacy only to be seen in the original. The dark edges lose abruptness by the addition of a little Chinese white, giving sense of retirement which defies reproduction.

For those students who are naturally drawn to this kind of pictorial treatment the moral is clear. They must draw, long and hard, with deliberate precision and definite purpose; see the picture in their minds, and become master of the medium and the materials. A few months of study on these lines would be an admirable corrective to any whose work has become diffuse, indeterminate, and "accidental."

Miss Elyse Lord, R.I.

MISS ELYSE LORD has won wide popularity for her unique colour prints, a reputation which has overshadowed her gifts as a water-colourist. Her methods, like her subjects, are whimsically unusual. She paints on silk with the addition of gold to the colours, and sometimes she substitutes polished wood for paper. The effects are so extraordinarily subtle that no method of reproduction can do her justice, as one of the peculiar charms of her paintings arises from the constant changes which take place as one looks at them. When the spectator makes the slightest move gold flashes in unexpected places, or the sheen of wood turns from cold darks to warm lights ; and her framing and mounting is exquisitely enhancing.

“ The Hunchback ” (Plate XXXIII) is painted on polished maple, and the sheen of the wood suggests a curtained background as no painting could possibly do. The coat was made from actual pieces of material collected in Turkestan by Sir Amel Stein. The painting was done with transparent colours mixed with white. Here and there a little varnish was used to coat the colour, but otherwise there is nothing exceptional in the technical method. Needless to say, the picture illustrates an Arabian Nights story—the swallowed fish-bone and the stories told by the tailor, the barber, and his brothers. These figures dangle from each end of the fish-bone while the emperor sits on the hunchback’s hump.

We are concerned, however, with the picture—the composition, not the subject-matter. A simple way to see the colour

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undisturbed by the subject is to look at the picture upside down. Artists often do this in order to see what is wrong with the colour scheme or why it is right. In this case the result is so dramatic that the reasons for its charms are revealed in a single glance. First, there is the strong contrast between the light warm section and the cold dark one. Next we are attracted by the fact that the mass of colours in the coat, dominated by red, is not in strong contrast with the background but is softened by the surrounding of pale orange. And most effective, perhaps, is the reticence in the colour of the hanging figures—all cold greys and muted blues. Lastly, we note the enlivening effect of the white, and almost white, parts, without which so many bright colours would be disturbing.

On turning the picture round again we shall be surprised that we could not diagnose it before.

The other drawing, "A Spring Dream" (Plate XXXIV), is on silk and painted with no addition to transparent colours except white; but the speckled clouds (which, unfortunately, do not show in the reproduction) were put in with gold leaf and scraped off patchily.

The picture illustrates a poem from the Chinese of the eighth century by Tsin-Tsan. It is impossible to analyse the delicate suggestion of spring which pervades the composition. The first impression is of figures, trees, birds, and blossom, blown on with an absence of plan that happens to be charming, but the more one studies it the more one realizes that it is designed with care in every detail. For soon one has a feeling of a breeze moving softly from the bottom at the left to the top at the right: in almost every part of the picture lines are disposed in that direction. Look at the group of birds on the left. The



PLATE XXIII

THE HUNCHBACK

(Exhibited at the Royal Institute of Water-Colour Painters)

Elyse Lord



PLATE XXIV

A SPRING DREAM
(Exhibited at the Royal Institute of Water-Colour Painters)

Elyse Lord

MISS ELYSE LORD, R.I.

mind's eye travels along the fallen blossom, is caught by the tree stems, passed on to the three other birds up to the gold clouds, and out at the top right corner.

It is now evident that the two straight lines at the bottom left are not purposeless: they are parallel to several others vaguely indicated at the top left, all helping to produce a quietly irresistible movement.

Look at it from right to left, beginning at the bottom. Again the mind's eye is attracted by a long rush and travels thence by the ends of fluttering draperies over the shoulder of the figure to the end of the tree, and is carried swiftly to the top left corner. Once we have found the basic lines of the composition the picture is seen to be filled with rhythmic curves of the utmost delicacy.

William Redworth

ALTHOUGH a frequent exhibitor at London and provincial galleries, Mr. Redworth's work has not attracted the attention it deserves, save from the more discriminating connoisseurs. This is partly due to his avoidance of membership of the recognized art societies and his modest retirement for many years in his native county; but more because he has not painted to fight for prominence in the hurly-burly of large exhibitions. He has not succumbed to the temptation to deliberately strengthen his work so as to withstand the domination of noisy neighbours. Consequently his patrons are never painfully surprised to find that what sang in an exhibition shouts in the home. Nor has he fallen a victim to the tendency of most artists who live exclusively among the subjects they paint—viz. to paint all they know in every picture instead of all they need to express the mood of the moment.

Mr. Redworth (who writes with the same quiet delicacy as he paints) sums up his aims and methods—

“ I should imagine my methods are the same as those of most water-colour painters : to make a drawing and then colour it. Certainly I have no technical ‘ secrets ’ ; it seems to me that the only one worth having is how to do without them.

“ First, I set out the subject on the paper, and settle the leading lines, and point of focus. This I lightly sketch in charcoal. I use charcoal in preference to pencil because it can be flicked off the paper without injury to the surface, and because the first broad washes can be used to wash away certain parts and fix points of sharp accentuation where desired.

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As I see it, a water-colour is essentially a drawing rather than a painting, and the less colour I need to apply the better I like it.

“As to paper. My personal preference is for the David Cox variety, chiefly because it prevents laboured finish; but I constantly change from one kind to another. As soon as I overcome the difficulties of a paper and begin to get glib, I change to another make, because it would seem that when painting ceases to be experimental it ceases to be vital. Only the undiscerning prefer suave ease in execution to the signs of battle. A victory can only be won by fighting.

“With regard to subject, I seem to be interested in the various manifestations of light. Perhaps that is why I like interiors where the light reverberates like an echo, and whispers in dark corners. The interior of a wood is to me the most enchanting of all subjects. I am so unfortunate as not to be very responsive to the picturesque and the striking, and therefore I prefer simple subjects—flat country rather than mountains, and so on. It seems to me not to matter much what the objects are as long as they serve to illustrate some interesting lighting effect. As Carot said, ‘the subject is the light.’

“You will probably agree with me, that an artist’s methods, and to some extent his theories, are conditioned by his own limitations.”

Mr. Redworth’s two pictures are apt illustrations of his mental attitude. His reticence never suggests weakness, because his pictures are always painted with sincerity arising from firm conviction and guided by impeccable taste.

The “Interior of a Barn” (Plate XXV) is a notable instance of the avoidance of temptations to emphasize petty details and



PLATE XXV

INTERIOR OF A BARN

W. Redworth

W. Redworth

SHOREHAM

PLATE XXVI



WILLIAM REDWORTH

tricky cheap effects. It has an air of serenity. Both lights and darks are subdued, but the tone relations give an impression of inevitable rightness. The great masses are well marked but undisturbed. The eye is drawn quietly over the whole picture with an increasing sense of satisfaction.

Analysing the composition, it is easy to see that the pervading calm is produced by the repetition of similar forms. There are several horizontal lines and a few vertical ones. All the curved pieces of woodwork go in one or two directions. The undulating forms in the foreground are repeated in those farther back.

We do not think of it so much as a picture of a barn; rather we feel it to be a beautiful and effortless arrangement of finely proportioned lines and masses.

Colour of such refinement can be seen perfectly only in the original, with its delicately modulated gradations, and its suggestion of austerity enlivened by fancy.

His other example, "Shoreham" (Plate XXVI), exhibits an equal reticence. Many painters would have waited till the sun broke completely through the clouds, strengthened the contrasts, dotted the water with vivid flashes—and destroyed the effect of langourous calm. In the composition, too, a little more insistence on the radiation of so many lines would have turned the effect of indubitable unity into an obvious piece of pictorial artifice. As it is, the eye is gently led from both sides of the picture, up to the brightest touch of colour, to rest a moment in quiet satisfaction.

Leonard Richmond, R.O.I., R.B.A.

MR. RICHMOND has explained and illustrated his methods of water-colour painting, and his attitude and outlook, very fully in two books for which he has been wholly or jointly responsible, viz. *The Technique of Water-Colour Painting* and *The Art of Landscape Painting*. It is unnecessary, therefore, to refer to his work in detail. Mr. Richmond paints with both transparent and opaque pigments in several ways, but has confined his attention here to two methods of using transparent pigments on canvas-grained paper. His two illustrations were painted expressly for this book, and the following is his own description of the procedure—

“ The landscape entitled ‘ Moving Clouds ’ was painted on canvas-grained paper. This paper, which is sold in two surfaces—fine and coarse—deserves to be better known amongst water-colour artists. It is in reality a good brand of white cartridge paper which has been stamped so as to resemble the appearance of canvas that is used for oil painting.

“ It is advisable to paint on a fine surface paper for small water-colours, and the coarser surface for pictures on a large scale.

“ It is wonderful how this canvas paper will allow itself to be ill-treated at the hands of the amateur painter without in any way retaliating by showing dirty paint smudges, or impure washes of colour.

“ It appears to be amenable to almost any sort of treatment, providing no body colour is used. Whether the colours are painted thin or thick, pure or opaque, the sparkling grain of

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the paper in each instance triumphs over many indiscretions that may have been made by the artist.

“ In oil painting, an opaque colour like black, or Vandyke brown, will look quite transparent if painted thinly with a generous mixture of liquid medium on very coarse-grained canvas. Each of the innumerable raised portions that are characteristic of the surface of a coarse canvas, catch the radiating effect of light, thus causing an evenly distributed sparkle, which is the exact opposite of dull opacity.

“ The foregoing remarks apply equally to the transparency of water-colour on canvas-grained paper.

“ ‘ Moving Clouds ’ (Plate XXVII) was painted in the studio without any help from outdoor sketches or pictures. Several little compositions—based on imagination—were made in Vandyke-brown ink with a small sable brush, and the subject was selected from the one that displayed the most promise.

“ The picture was commenced by drawing with soft charcoal, some evidence of which can be seen in the coloured reproduction, chiefly along the contours of the hills. The charcoal proved invaluable for making a solid preliminary tone of the nearer hills, by gently rubbing it into the paper, but keeping the charcoal tint as flat as possible. No ‘ Fixatif ’ was used, since soft charcoal blends so easily with pure water-colour washes.

“ The clouds, with glimpses of the sky, were painted with rapidity after the paper had been previously damped with clean water.

“ The dark-coloured hills were painted over, in the first instance, with a half-tone tint, and when nearly dry large masses of dark hill shadows were painted over most of the ground colour,

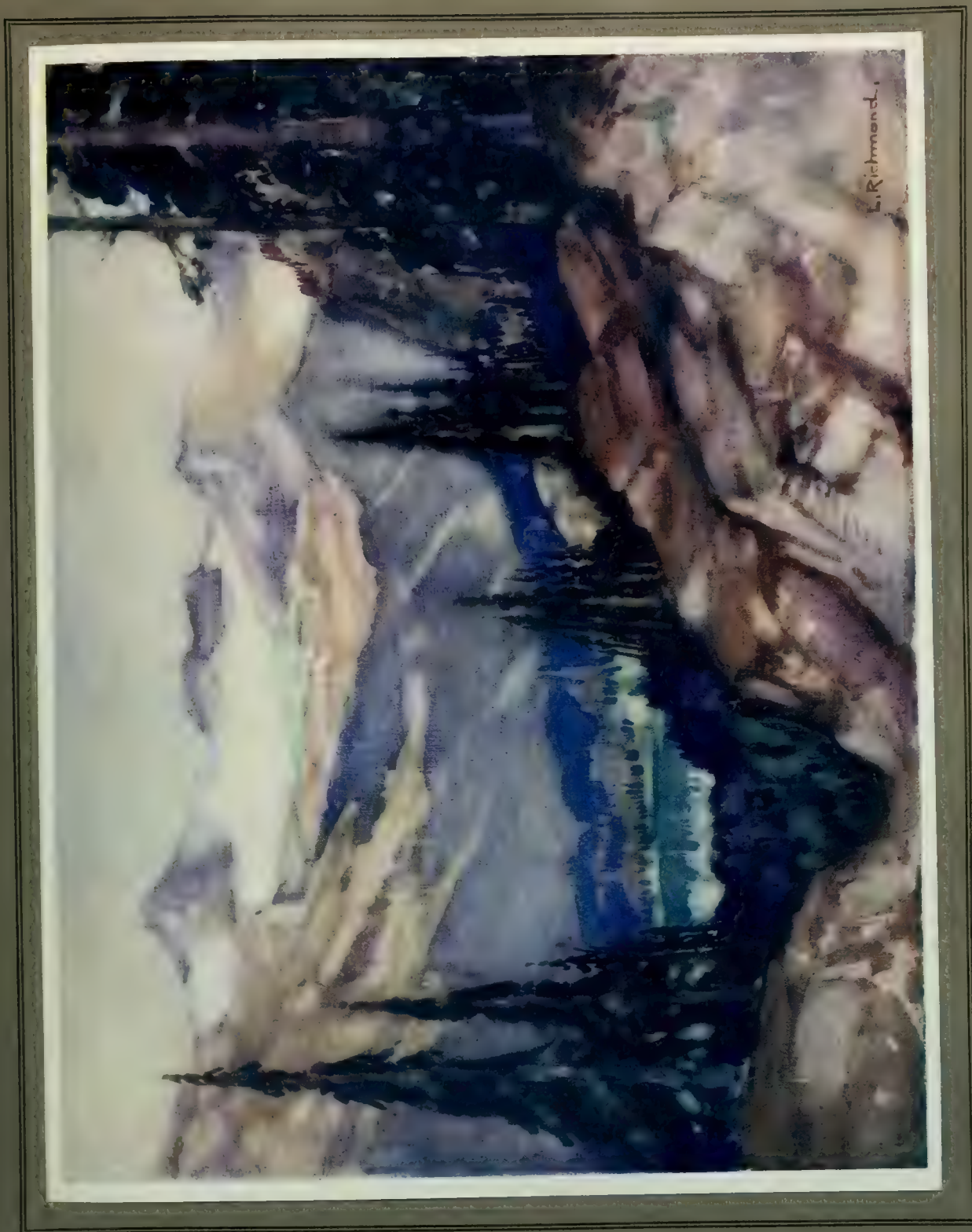


PLATE XXVII

Leonard Richmond

THE YOHO VALLEY, CANADIAN ROCKIES
(Exhibited at the Royal Society of British Artists)



Leonard Richmond

MOVING CLOUDS

PLATE XXVIII

LEONARD RICHMOND, R.O.I., R.B.A.

of which various patches were left, so as to get variety in colour tones.

“A small sponge was used for washing out one or two small portions of the lower ends of the sweeping clouds. The immediate foreground was treated in the same manner, finishing with a few sharp touches of local colour.

“‘The Yoho Valley, Canadian Rockies’ (Plate XXVIII), was painted on fine canvas-grained paper.

“There is a considerable difference in the treatment of these two pictures. The first reproduction demonstrates the possibility of painting by a direct method over a charcoal ground, with little or no alterations to follow; but the Canadian mountain picture was painted in the first instance with strong deep colours, followed in the final stage with a good deal of sponging out. A hog-hair paint-brush was also used for washing out a few sharply-defined passages of light.

“Quite a lot of the rocky foreground was sponged out, in addition to the range of snow-capped mountains. A small eye-sponge, purchasable from a chemist, works admirably on canvas-grained paper. Clean blotting paper was used immediately after each sponging out. Fresh water is important where sponging out is concerned.”

As Mr. Richmond and the writer have jointly considered a good many matters relating to painting, the former was asked to express his personal view on the diverse opinions of some of the other contributors. The points which have been raised are of such importance to all who are genuinely interested in water-colour that every authoritative expression by painters of thoughtful experience will be welcomed. Mr. Richmond writes—

“It seems to me rather pathetic when artists state

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dogmatically that water-colour painting should be limited to one recognized method only, i.e. transparent wash. The conservative are, no doubt, quite happy when working in accordance with a respected tradition, such as transparent wash on white paper, and advocating it is a perfect method. But perfection, *in one direction only*, is a dull prospect for the adventurous.

“Turner, in his ardent desire for vivid expression, displayed the courage to break away from convention when he splashed body colour on tinted paper. John Sell Cotman sometimes invoked the aid of paste so as to get certain structural qualities which the mixture of pure water and pigment failed to achieve. Why limit ourselves to any one form when the progress of the art is at stake? There are no two temperaments exactly alike among painters. It is not possible for opposing minds to be content with the same formula.”

H. Davis Richter, R.I., R.O.I., R.B.C.

MR. RICHTER has achieved an enviable reputation as a painter of gorgeous decorative arrangements of flowers and interiors which make spots of rich colour in many exhibitions. His water-colours are less widely known than his oils, but cover a wider range of subjects.

Trained as a craftsman and a designer of furniture and interior decoration, a sense of logical construction and tasteful adornment had become habitual before he turned seriously to painting. Nothing is left to vague chance. Every stage in the making of a picture is so carefully thought out beforehand that he does not need to hope for the best, and resort to dubious subterfuges when the worst happens.

When working in transparent colours he lays on the colour with clean direct washes in order to preserve that most precious quality, unrivalled by any other medium—luminosity. He does not attempt to do what can only be done in oils, viz. the luscious richness of very deep tones, because he knows that it is disastrous to force any medium beyond the range of its natural expression.

But when he wants to work on a large scale, he combines opaque with transparent colour, using various tones of grey paper.

The flower piece (Plate XXIX), rather more realistic than usual, is a large picture, so the reduction in reproduction hides the method to some extent. The paper is pale warm grey, often left untouched in the lighter flowers. The drawing was done in clear pencil lines, which show considerably, thus shaping the edges of the petals where required. The darker

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portions of the picture are painted in transparent colour. Brighter colours were used than would have been necessary on white paper, because each colour is modified by the greyness of the paper which shows through. In the lighter parts a little Chinese white has been added to make the paper less dominating; in the highest lights considerably more white was used.

The background, of course, demanded the greatest technical skill. The artist had to work swiftly and yet maintain the form of the edges of the flowers, varying the colour but keeping an even tone. There are no short cuts to the skill required to paint such a background; the most highly endowed would need a deal of practice. There are no tricks—no crafty losing of edges into the background, or arrangement of happily-placed shadows.

More than might appear at first sight depends upon the arrangement of the flowers. It is not so accidental as it looks. The full white flower in the centre of the picture is the focus of light. This is the only one which is front view. All the others vary in positions and in stages of growth. The buds are at the edges; in the centre the mass is solid. In the midst of half a dozen light flowers is a dark one, enriched by the juxtaposition of the greyish-green leaves. The colour of the bowl is mainly a shade of the red of the flowers; the ground is a darker and more greyed version of the same colour, into which the bright red and the pink flowers sink without obtrusion.

Note how the lines of the stems and leaves radiate with considerable regularity, and the double curve of a long leaf on the right emphasizes the formality without spoiling the natural grace of the whole. See, too, how the cold background brings out the warmth of the flowers and allows the cold leaves to fall into a secondary position. These devices are used with such



PLATE XXIX

THE RAG FAIR: CALEDONIAN MARKET
(*Exhibited at the Royal Academy*)

H. Davis Richter



PLATE XXX

TULIPS

H. Davis Richter

*(Exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy, and the Royal Institute of Water-Colour Painters.
Purchased by the MacKellovie Art Gallery, New Zealand)*

H. DAVIS RICHTER, R.I., R.O.I., R.B.C.

reserve as to be almost unnoticed, but if made more obvious would defeat the painter's object, viz. to reveal the natural beauties of the flowers while creating a beautiful arrangement.

The " Rag Fair, Caledonian Market " (Plate XXX) is a frankly decorative adaptation. The design in line, mass and colour, has become more significant than the place. Quite half the important lines in the picture are either vertical or horizontal, brought into harmony by a series of lines which converge upon the sunlit tower. The colour consists mainly of two opposed colours—reds and greens—modified and enhanced by yellows and violet-greys. Mr. Richter has successfully withstood the temptation to allow the figures to be too assertive. They take their places as part of the scheme.

Technically the method is of the simplest. Most of the washes are flat or very slightly gradated. Scarcely any part of the surface has received more than two washes—pale and pure colours in the first stage, darks and greys in the second. Every one of the completing deft touches is absolutely direct. There is no softening of edges, wiping out, or any other device; the *effect* of softness is secured by delicate distinctions of tone and colour. The " what " and the " where " matter more than the " how."

The above was written before Mr. Richter favoured me with the following notes, which throw additional light on his views and methods—

" In selecting drawings so distinct in style and treatment to illustrate my work it would seem to indicate that I have an open mind on the question of water-colour painting, without any definite method of approach to the subject. That is probably the case, with the qualification that the treatment should be

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kept well within the scope of the materials employed and not strained beyond their natural powers of expression.

“ Thus it is difficult with a transparent medium such as water-colour to ‘ kill ’ the colour of the paper; it is obviously better to make use of it, and in this way its selection should have a great influence on the completed drawing. For the subject entitled ‘ The Rag Fair ’ (Plate XXX) a white paper (Whatman’s ‘ hot-pressed ’) has been used. The quality of this white surface glistening through slight washes of transparent colour is the determining factor in the painting. No attempt at the actual strength of the subject has been attempted; if that had been the objective, it would obviously have been better to paint the subject in some other medium or on a coloured paper.

“ In the other picture, ‘ Tulips ’ (Plate XXIX), a buff semi-absorbent paper has been used, readily giving greater power to darken tones without the painful process of several washes required to obtain the same strength on a white paper. In the lighter portions of the drawing a little Chinese white has been employed, giving greater solidity to the form of the flowers. This drawing more closely approaches reality; but this is not necessarily an advantage to it artistically. It was painted from the actual flowers in position, while the other example is a collection of disconnected ‘ snapshot ’ notes afterwards composed as a scene to give an impression of the subject. Certainly all the material of this sketch is to be found at the Caledonian Market, but it is doubtful if the grouping of the figures with the architecture has ever happened. It is not an exact record: it is an impression left on the mind. That, in itself, suggests the use of a slighter, less realistic rendering.”

Henry Rushbury, A.R.A., R.W.S., R.E.

OF recent years there has been a distinct movement among water-colour painters to a style resembling that of the early masters of the art, consisting of a drawing outlined in ink and tinted with a few washes. Some of the more prominent exponents are etchers, and the evolution would seem to be a natural one from their art of line to that of colour. There is also the desire to preserve and emphasize fine draughtsmanship in subjects which demand clear delineation. But the movement is more largely influenced by the conviction that the characteristic qualities of transparent water-colour is best displayed in a few simple washes, and that the art tends to degenerate when attempts are made to obtain effects for which other mediums are better fitted. Whatever the reasons the results are often attractive and convincing.

Among the painters who have adopted this style with undoubted success one of the most prominent is Mr. Rushbury, who appears to have set out to rival the early masters, and does not suffer by comparison. He often chooses the same kind of subjects—romantic architecture and street scenes with masses of moving figures—subjects presenting difficulties paralysing to all save the highly expert draughtsmen, who are also adepts in the subtleties of pictorial composition. How to express the effect of multitudinous details of architecture and give a sense of moving life to masses of figures, in a few lines, and how to suggest light and colour in a few washes, are problems which leave this kind of pictorial interpretation in a few distinguished hands. Because the slightest incompetence is evident to all,

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there is no possibility of hiding inefficiency behind fortunate accidents.

The landscape painter who chooses the rural type of subject can perform audacious feats of composition with comparative ease. He can cut down trees, erect churches, introduce streams and bridges, and obliterate whole tracts of unsuitable material, but the themes of Mr. Rushbury's pictures cannot be treated with scant concern for actuality. He has to choose his subjects with greater care, and to be more adroit and resourceful, because his opportunities for rearrangement are severely limited. Mr. Rushbury's solutions of exceedingly difficult problems are so successful that at first sight they appear artless, as if there had been no problem to solve.

"The Piazza" (Plate XXXI) is an excellent example. The tower is nearly exactly in the centre—usually a misfortune. On its left is a stretch of plain sky and below a plain building. Together these two features occupy nearly half of the picture. His problem was how to balance this plainness with the heavy masses of highly decorated buildings on the right. He could not erect another house or tower to fill a vacant space, decorate a plain building or simplify a complicated one. He had to acknowledge compulsory restrictions to his freedom to make obvious rearrangements. Mr. Rushbury surmounts these formidable obstacles with apparent ease, (1) by emphasizing the variety of tone and colour in the architectural details on the left, and (2) by placing a mass of strongly marked figures, animals and umbrellas underneath. By creating interest and weight in what would otherwise be the distinctly weaker side of the picture he almost perfects the balance. But these artifices are not sufficient if the tones of the buildings on the right



PLATE XXXI

THE PIAZZA: VERONA

(Exhibited at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours)

Henry Rushbury



PLATE XXXII

THE PAPAL PALACE: VITERBO
(Exhibited at the Royal Society of Painters in *Water-Colours*)

Henry Rushbury

HENRY RUSHBURY, A.R.A., R.W.S., R.E.

are rendered exactly as they appeared. So he has deliberately varied the tones to suit his pictorial purposes. The buildings in shadow could not have had reflected lights half as pale as he has indicated; and the figures in the shadow of the nearest

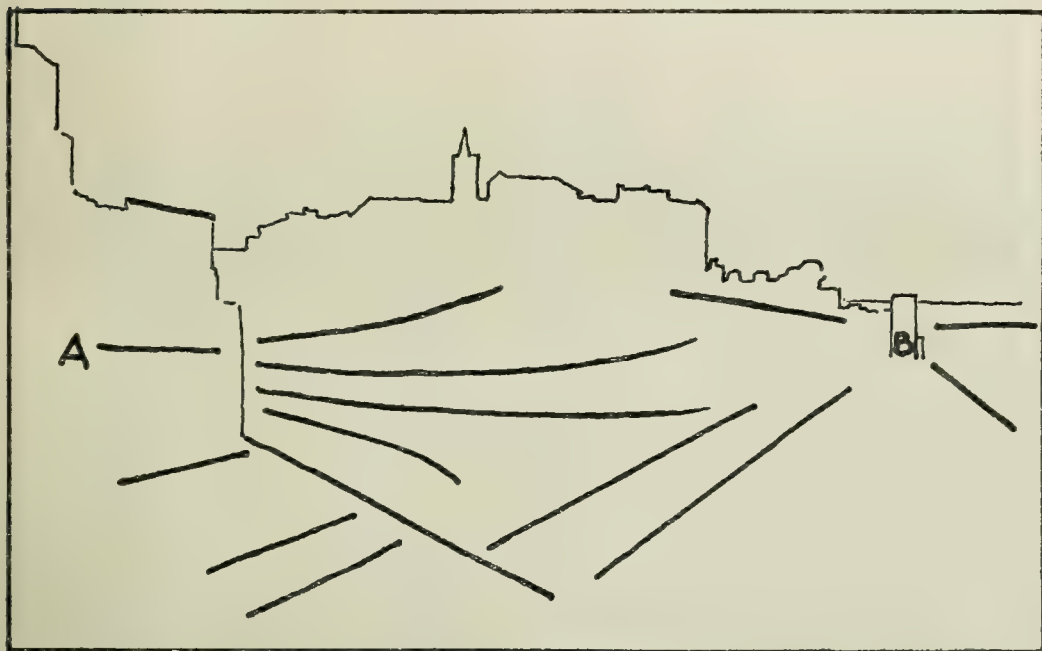


FIG. II

buildings could not have appeared as light as those in sunlight. But if he had not exaggerated he would not have succeeded. This is not a doubtful procedure: it is merely a freer use of method employed in nearly every picture, viz. emphasis and reticence in accordance with pictorial needs.

In "The Papal Palace" (Plate XXXII) colour is used still more sparingly, and its purpose is restricted to imparting variety to the large masses of shadow, and to emphasizing the sense in light and heat. The addition of local colours might

BRITISH WATER-COLOUR PAINTERS OF TO-DAY

have ruined the impressiveness of a subject which is due primarily to the magnificence of the forms, the powerful contrasts of the great buildings with the tiny houses, and the details of the surrounding flat landscape. Here also Mr. Rushbury's command of composition is just as masterly, though of a different kind, because the subject lends itself to other ways of arrangement. The basis of the composition is shown in Fig. 11. It consists of two series of converging lines. One series meets at *A* and spreads out fanwise across the picture. The other series meets near the horizon at *B*. Together these two series of lines hold the whole multitude of features together, organized into coherence. To what extent his drawing differs from the actual appearance I do not know (nor, probably, does he), but it is certain that in less sensitive hands the picture could not have emerged as such a finely ordered and impressive whole.

W. W. Russell, R.A., R.W.S.

BETWEEN the painting of portraits and controlling the destinies of the Royal Academy Schools, Mr. Walter Russell snatches occasions to dash off fascinating notes in water-colour. These out-of-door sketches are not fragmentary studies for more detailed pictures, but complete impressions within the limits of their purpose—little flashes of insight into beauties that all too often escape from the laboured painting. We enjoy them for what they are, just as we delight in a *bon mot* or the sparkling description of an incident, without regarding them as preparations for a lecture or a novel.

Mr. Russell's sketches appear to be so unstudied that it would be pointless to attempt to do more than appreciate in general terms, because dissertation and analysis are futile in face of efforts as spontaneous and unpremeditated as the song of a bird. But the expression of beauty by this joyful means cannot be accidental: it happens too often. On closer examination we get hints of the reasons. "Regatta, Shoreham" (Plate XXXIII), Mr. Russell tells me, was painted in a boat on a choppy sea. The very movement seems to have enhanced the expression of lightheartedness of scene. Set down in summary fashion, with no attempt at exact delineation, the sketch conveys a suggestion of that elusive something which is infinitely more valuable than the studied arrangement, accurate drawing, and the competent laying on of paint. It expresses the pleasure we all feel at the inspiriting freshness of a cool, breezy, summer day.

Everything in the picture seems to be moving. The clouds are racing with the sailing boats; the shadows chase over the

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background of hills and trees. There is a cheery variety everywhere : in the tones of the sky, shapes of the clouds, sizes of the boats, colour of the sea. Take away the large boats on the right and see how comparatively tame the rest would be ; or cover the parts of the land painted in pale warm colours and see how the zest of the picture is lost. In fact obliterate almost any part and there is a distinct lack of interest. The variety of colour is extensive. On the cold side it runs the full gamut from blue and green to cool grey and on the warm side from red and orange to warm grey. Turn the picture upside down and see how the horizontal bar of varied darks on the land gives lightness to the whole sketch ; and note, too, the influence of the exceedingly delicate touch of muted violet on the most distant hills. The more carefully we look the more evidences we find of the means which have produced the delightful effect. But the completest analysis would not help us to paint another. The power to express the mysterious something is a gift of the gods.

The other sketch, " The Hay Rick " (Plate XXXIV), is still more slight. Here the subject is simple, strong, and quiet—a large mass of cold-toned trees contrasted by the smaller masses of the warm-coloured rick and the pale yellowish grass. The picture would have been slightly unbalanced but for the large light passage on right-hand tree, and rather dull but for the emphatic darks on the left. There is one touch (literally) which is extraordinarily interesting. Follow the line of the ladder up to the top of the picture and there is an indication of a tree trunk. Now follow the line of the stakes propping up the rick and there are some more indications of tree trunks. In each case otherwise isolated details are connected with another part



PLATE XXXIII

REGATTA: SHOREHAM

(Exhibited at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours)

W. W. Russell

W. W. RUSSELL, R.A., R.W.S.

of the picture. Two other points are of especial interest. The sky is cold and plain; the grass is warm and plain. Varied tones of strongly marked clouds would have taken away all the serenity and strength. The other point is the value of the dark strokes at the bottom left of the picture.

These are instances of the way the sensitive artist, painting without deliberate thought but solely for sheer enjoyment, cannot help creating an harmonious composition.

Harry Watson, R.W.S., R.W.A.

THE first impression created by Mr. Watson's pictures is that of great vigour tempered by discipline. Every stroke is an evidence of technical mastery, and the design is characterized by unhesitating conviction. One feels that the picture was so clearly in his mind at the beginning, and that he was so certain of the treatment at every stage of its progress, that he could not possibly go wrong. But his virtuosity has not made him into a mere recording machine; rather it has enabled him to better express his artistic intentions.

Some of the reasons for this notable command over the medium Mr. Watson gives in a letter full of valuable information. He writes—

“What I have done has been the result of much study and practice. Careful thought for the tone of the subject, and the arrangement (which means spacing, etc.), these are my main considerations when commencing a subject; but this applies to all painters.

“I prefer, when painting in water-colours, to have the paper pasted on to cardboard. That prevents the paper from buckling, which, I think, is a most important matter. (But in the case of a small painting on stout paper straining alone would be sufficient.) To paint a sky it is necessary to be able to go right across the paper. Once there is a bulge in the paper it is impossible to put down a flat wash. There must be no impediment if one is to attain one's object.

“In painting a sky which has to be done rapidly I very often paint the whole of the sky with a large brush—sometimes

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with a hog-hair brush—and when the colour is still damp I take out cloud shapes with a clean brush, preferably a round hog-hair brush. Then I paint in the lights and darks of the clouds on the clean spaces.

“ It is difficult to lay down a rule that applies to every occasion, but I have found the above method very useful. I experimented for some time before I found this method of painting.

“ Much water-colour is done in the earlier way: that is, to draw the subject and add slight tinting, but there *is* an art of water-colour apart from the tinted drawing. The water-colourist who paints Nature as he sees it does so in much the same way as does the painter in oils, but many subjects which can be painted in oils cannot be done in water-colours, for the simple reason that one does not get the same freshness in the darks as one gets in oils. Sargent painted water-colours and often produced very rich shadows, but generally it is wiser not to choose subjects too dark for water-colours.

“ To-day there are many painters who use body colour, which, to my mind, does not produce the best kind of water-colour, although it has been used with success in rare cases. I cannot help feeling it should be avoided as far as possible. The fresh, clean touch of the right tone and colour is beautiful. It produces the bloom which has a quality never got by messing the paper about.

“ You ask me how I get clean lights. Sometimes, if the subject is not too complicated, lights can be left; at other times I find it is necessary to take out lights. I have found a little gum water useful when mixed with the paint; and I have cut shapes out of tracing paper and washed the spaces with a nearly



PLATE XXXV

THE PASS OF GLENCOE
(Exhibited at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colour)

Harry Watson



PLATE XXXVI

NEAR OBAN

Harry Watson

HARRY WATSON, R.W.S. R.W.A.

dry sponge. If the sponge is too wet it leaves messy edges, which should be avoided. One should be very careful of the value of distance in the sky; this is most important.

“Students should always study the subject carefully before painting, and try to work out mentally what they are aiming at, and then, when working, retain the freshness of the idea which is in their minds.”

Mr. Watson's two pictures are brilliant justifications of his methods, and telling examples of how he can express, by the same masterful method, widely differing effects.

“Glencoe” (Plate XXXV) arrests attention by its almost primitive violence, exactly expressive of an untamed wilderness of mountains; and before looking more closely we might conclude that the design was haphazard or accidental. But it is soon found to be an ordered arrangement; and, strangely enough, it is ordered so as to better convey the impression first produced.

We are first struck by the almost total absence of curved lines. Even in the scurrying clouds there is one with a long, straight edge. The next noticeable feature (one of greater constructive importance) is the rush of a dozen lines out from a sudden bend in the road near the bottom of the left of the picture. This point is the centre of radiation which holds together all the conflicting masses. Clouds, mountains, and roads are thus brought into a common pictorial purpose. Next we become conscious of the arrangement which gives the picture its tremendous force. Across the middle is an almost horizontal bar of dark tone and down against it three lines are hurled—the edge of the great cloud, the edge of the distant mountain, and the dark rock on the right. The regular repetition gives

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the same sense of decision and finality as three crashes on the drums at the end of a symphony.

Perhaps the most unusual feature of Mr. Watson's technique is the way in which he distributes finish over the whole picture. He does not elaborate a few details and leave the rest as so much vague mystery, or for the onlooker to fill in for himself. But the way in which he manages to do it without giving the slightest impression of labour or monotony is remarkable; and the deftness of touch by which he suggests a thousand tones and movements is truly remarkable.

His other picture, "Near Oban" (Plate XXXVI), expresses an entirely different mood. It is painted with the same vigour and emphasis and yet the effect is quiet and reserved. Here there is no powerful concentration or contrasts. All the long lines of the composition approach the horizontal. There is greyness everywhere. The dark grey rocks, the blue-grey sea, and the green-grey grass are echoed in the sky—blue-grey at the top and greenish-grey below; but the repetition of lines and colours is saved from the possibility of dullness by the rounded clouds which move in a line across the others and by the flashes of white and pale grey on the sea and rocks.

Terrick Williams, A.R.A., V.P.R.I., R.O.I., R.B.C., R.W.A.

PRE-EMINENTLY a painter of light, Mr. Terrick Williams has found most inspiration in the sunnier parts of Europe. He seems to be especially attracted by the brilliance of white buildings in sunlight or shadowed by neighbouring trees, by grey sails against translucent water, by twilight, and by moonlight when the half-hidden things take on new forms.

All his painting is probably influenced by the fact that he sketches in pastel, because many of the fleeting effects he catches so admirably could not be rendered on the spot by any other medium. This, too, may partly account for his occasional use of gouache.

A logical worker, he forms clear conceptions before commencing the picture and is never at the mercy of chance, or of uncontrolled emotions evoked by momentary impressions. He is acutely conscious of the importance of tone. In his informative little book on Oil Painting he shows how he begins by indicating the light and shade by painting thinly, in neutral colour in monochrome, so that the main problems of tone are settled, without doubt, at the beginning. This method is not possible when using transparent water-colour, but the prime necessity for registering tone values is always present in Mr. Terrick Williams's mind.

"Tree Shadows—Cassis" (Plate XXXVII) is full of the gaiety of glancing sunlight and happy rhythmic movement. Shadows dance along the road and up the walls, branches flutter across the houses, and bright dresses animate the scene; but

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behind this apparent waywardness there is a solid construction which relates every part to the whole. Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the design is the triangular shadow on the wall repeated on two sides by long tree stems going across each top corner of the picture. This double pyramidal structure gives to the composition a sense of stability without destroying its liveliness. In contrast with this severity there is a delightful flow of curved continuity in the thin branches with tufts of foliage which stray playfully across the wall, carrying the eye pleasantly all over the upper half of the picture relieving the straightness of the shadows on the ground and walls. There is a most interesting example of the way in which the experienced artist falls into the practice of continuity to be seen where the line of the left branch of the distant tree is continued by splashes of light on the wall.

I do not suppose that any parts of the composition cited were deliberate: probably the artist has never noticed them! Still, nothing was accidental, but the unconscious outcome of a deep sense of the pictorial value of strength and order.

"The Dark Canal—Venice" (Plate XXXVIII) is a fine appreciation of the solemnity of night enhanced by tiny lights and flickering reflections. There is one curious resemblance in the two pictures. In each there is a long, high wall and another short one, while the shape of the road in one is almost similar to that of the canal in the other; but there the resemblance ceases. The composition is restrained almost to severity. It is constructed of a series of retiring lines expressing horizontal planes opposed by another series of verticals, and the tone is a regular gradation from the light on the right-hand wall, broken by dark passages on the light wall and light passages on the dark walls.



PLATE XXXVII

TREE SHADOWS: CASSIS
 (Exhibited at the Royal Institute of Water-Colour Painters)
 (In the possession of David Hay, Esq.)

Terrick Williams



PLATE XXXVIII

THE DARK CANAL: VENICE
(Exhibited at the Royal Institute of Water-Colour Painters)
(In the possession of David Hay, Esq.)

Terrick Williams

TERRICK WILLIAMS, A.R.A., V.P.R.I., R.O.I., R.B.C.

The painting consists, for the most part, of large, simple washes superimposed several times, in places, to obtain a richness and depth seldom seen in transparent water-colour. The painting of the wall on the right is an interesting example of the practical value of granulation which is used to give an admirable impression of the texture of the surface.

The colour scheme is one of restrained power—subdued reds balanced by restrained blue-greens, enlivened by a few touches of red and orange. Again there is a sparing use of outline for emphasis, but without disturbing the simplicity and dignity of the general effect.

Since the foregoing was written Mr. Terrick Williams has been good enough to contribute the following detailed description of his technical methods, which are of great value. He writes—

“ Those of my water-colours which depend for their effect on a definite scheme of light and shade are frequently worked over a fairly full-toned drawing in charcoal. This drawing (which is sometimes entirely in line, and sometimes rubbed down with the finger and then reinforced with firm outlines) is not fixed; but a very fluid wash of colour is lightly and rapidly passed over the whole drawing with a very large soft brush. This serves to retain a certain part of the tone and the more important features of the drawing, although something of each is inevitably removed by the brush. The darks are then put on with a well-charged brush, the intention being to obtain, if possible, the full effect of these in one operation. The drawing is then continued by obtaining (in one operation, if possible) the half-tones. Finally, the lights are worked in with very pale delicate washes. The two drawings in this book were done exactly in this method.

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“ Sometimes—especially if the subject is an architectural one—I make first a complete and full-toned charcoal drawing which I set with ‘fixatif,’ and then pass transparent washes over it in order to give something of the effect of colour. This method I employ when the subject is one that depends for its interest rather on form than colour. It is not possible thus to obtain a very brilliant scheme of colour, but I have found frequently that a pleasantly rich effect is obtained and that the colour, though quiet, is often of a quite agreeable warm silvery quality, and that the finished drawing has a harmony and breadth of effect.

“ For pale drawings, or those depending for their interest on skies, I find this charcoal method quite unsuitable. Instead, I draw lightly with pencil and then attempt to carry the drawing through in two, three, or at the most four, tintings. If more than four are needed the drawing is usually a failure and torn up, as I use sponging or washing hardly at all.”

A Personal Note

TWO of my own works and the following description of my methods are included, solely because I am naturally better acquainted with my own mental processes than of those of any other painter, and can write with greater freedom and candour about my own efforts.

I seldom sketch in water-colour, because I find that I can get much more of what I want, in half the time, by using pastels. Form, construction, selection of essentials, and registering of tone values come far more easily.

I seldom confine my drawing to just what I see, except when making pencil notes of details. Sometimes consciously, but more often unconsciously, numberless modifications creep in because I am thinking all the time of the coming picture. Some features are made larger, others smaller or left out altogether. The construction may undergo considerable changes. Indeed I doubt whether any experienced sketcher ever draws merely what he sees. Every sketch must be an amalgam of his past experiences welded into the present one. He does not go to Nature with an empty mind but with tendencies, convictions, and ideals, looking for further material with which to express them. Obviously the beginner cannot do anything of the kind because his attitude to Nature and to art is unformed. This explains, I suppose, why the clever student's exact and polished sketch is generally without significance, while the hasty note of the experienced artist, incorrect in every line, may seize the spirit of the scene. |

Usually when confronted with a subject of a kind that is

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new to me, or when I cannot see my way through it before I begin, I make two or three hasty notes in a small sketch-book, in order to get a grip on essentials and to correct a natural weakness to overload every drawing with insignificant details. If I find that the sketch does not "hang together" I abandon it, or make careful studies of separate parts that may be useful in other pictures.

Having decided on the general form of the sketch, I begin a fairly large one in pastel, preferably 15 in. by 18 in. or 15 in. by 20 in. Sometimes, however, I work on a smaller scale, 10 in. by 15 in., using a few cheap pastel chalks. In these cases the drawings are mainly line and tone studies reinforced with suggestions of colour.

As soon as possible after I get indoors I make further sketches from memory in black and white chalks, on grey paper, often altering the design and lighting. Then all that may help in the painting of a picture is stored ready for use.

An inveterate experimentalist, I am continually trying new methods, and often choose and design subjects to suit the technical method in which I am, at the moment, especially interested. Gouache, for example, I use to render effects where small spots of pale colours shine out from dark grounds. Those painters who stick rigidly to transparent water-colour and use it in only one way impose upon themselves a limitation in selection and expression which would take from me most of the adventure in painting.

Recently, in consequence of extended investigations into the subject of Colour Harmony, I have painted entirely with deliberately restricted colour schemes, finding that the loss in range is more than compensated by the gain in decorative restraint.



J. Littlejohns

PLATE XXXIX

AUTUMN GLOW



J. Littlejohns

A GREY DAY
(Exhibited at the Royal Academy)

PLATE XL

A PERSONAL NOTE

At odd moments I go through old sketch books and tear out pencil sketches that seem amenable to certain colour schemes. I put a few washes over them, experimentally, and those that promise well are added to a growing collection of subjects for future pictures.

I never use an easel in the studio except sometimes when painting in gouache. Instead I have a table large enough to hold an imperial drawing board and all necessary impedimenta. The early stages of most pictures are painted with the paper in an horizontal position, when water is least influenced by gravitation; later the drawing board is tilted by placing a rectangular block under it.

"Autumn Glow" (Plate XXXIX) was not painted from any particular place, and no part is consciously connected with any definite impression of Nature, except the trees in the foreground which were the result of an unusual experience. When cycling along a dull road, with no interesting features near at hand, I saw in the distance a group of trees which formed an arch. I made a rough note of the arrangement on a scrap of paper and promptly lost it. This happened fifteen years ago, but the impression was so strong that I often found myself toying with the memory and working it into various compositions.

The colour, too, was not a record of any actual combination I can remember to have seen. The main intention was to produce a satisfactory colour scheme, i.e. a combination of colours arranged in such ways and in such proportions that appealed to me as being harmonious. Only four pure colours were used—red, orange, yellow, and blue—with the addition of white and black to modify the purity. Three of the colours are analogous, i.e. nearly related in the spectrum. The other, blue,

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is strongly opposed to the other three. Working in accordance with a method advocated in my *Introduction to the Study of Colour*, each colour is either red, red-orange, orange, yellow-orange, or blue, modified by the addition of more or less grey. The presence of grey in every colour gives a common factor which almost ensures harmony, and, if the relative quantities are correctly proportioned, harmony is inevitable. The rest is a matter of design and tasteful rendering. The painting was done in gouache.

The other example, "A Grey Day" (Plate XL), is on more traditional lines except that it also is painted with gouache colours. But in this case less white and more water was used, so that the result is semi-transparent. The subject was suggested by a three-minute note of a bridge in Sussex, but the picture was deliberately drawn from memory, ten years after the sketch was made, so that I might not be influenced to put in anything just because (to quote a familiar excuse) "that was how it really looked." Apart from any question of shape, the bridge certainly never "looked" like the picture because the lighting is as if the sun shone from the north!

Exactly the same gouache colours were used as in the other picture, but sometimes two were mixed together as well as with grey. The sky was painted in one wash. The distance was added before it had completely dried. I am unable to get just this quality of softness with transparent colours. The rest of the picture was first covered with white with a touch of orange. This foundation modified the hardness of the edges of all the subsequent washes and touches, bringing it into harmony with the treatment of the sky without making the features indeterminate.

Conclusions

CONSIDERING the whole of these pictures together, both differences and similarities become more evident. In subject, outlook, and treatment, the variety is remarkable; and at first sight it would seem as if there were no common qualities. If this were so we could learn but little from them about the fundamentals of the art. Indeed, there would be no fundamentals! Each would be an example of a separate art if each were entirely different from the others. I will try to set down, in so many words, what seem to me to be the most important similarities and differences displayed.

1. In no case is any attempt made to copy Nature. Everyone knows, of course, that Nature cannot be perfectly imitated, though many uninspired and misguided attempts are made to get as much actual likeness as paints, brushes, and skill can achieve. But the true artist never is, or was, or will be attracted to that false trail. He knows that the perfect photograph, perfectly coloured, could not conceivably be a picture. More, there is a very real sense in which the true artist does not look at Nature! He sees what he wants to see. He sees imaginatively. I once sympathized with an artist while he was sketching because a huge telegraph pole happened to be in the middle of the foreground and he replied that he had not noticed it! But he admitted that if he could have made pictorial use of it he would not only have seen it but might have enlarged it, and added a dozen more!

Some fine artists are so little concerned with actuality that they cannot muster sufficient interest to learn such apparently

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useful knowledge as the rig of a boat, or the names of trees or flowers! They might be better equipped if they did, but their unconcern is always with the unessential or unimportant for their purpose. They are looking for what they need and cannot encumber themselves with anything that, to them, serves no artistic purpose. But they note with deliberate care the exact differences between, say, the tone of the land and the sky, or the colour of a tree in light and in shadow. They seize upon any relationship of line, tone, and colour which will help them to express what they want to express—movement, brilliance, strength, delicacy, repose, or any other qualities which they feel to be significant. Sir George Clausen sacrifices detail to emphasize massiveness. Mr. Russell concentrates on movement. Mr. Redworth understates tone contrasts in the interests of refinement. Mr. Richter sometimes disregards local colours for the sake of a colour scheme. All are agreed that a picture is a revelation of the artist's conception which can never be expressed by slavish imitation.

2. Every picture shows unmistakably that all artists are sensitive to the paramount importance of design. While they do not act in obedience to a set of hidebound conventions imposed by some outside authority, they have found that without composition there can be no picture. They may or may not have formulated theories or accepted the conclusions of others after independent consideration. Perhaps some of them have never felt the need to theorize at all. But, on analysis, every picture appears to be put together as if it were arranged in every part, although in most cases the method of arrangement is not evident.

It is sometimes suggested that an intensive study of pictorial

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composition is a danger, because it encourages the construction of a picture by a solely intellectual process, so that the result is emotionally dead and therefore aesthetically valueless. There is no valid reason for this fear. Zealous students will for a time exaggerate the importance of knowledge and construct pictures with more mechanism than imagination; but that will be merely a stage in their development. If they possess true creative force no knowledge will hinder its final development. On the contrary, when the knowledge has sunk in it will take its proper place and become the servant, not the master, of their imagination. Anyone who becomes enslaved by knowledge has not lost imagination by the operation of intellectual processes: he can have had no imagination at the beginning. And if he has no imagination he cannot become an artist, struggle as he may.

3. The differences in treatment and design are expressions of personality. Some are as powerful as posters, with sharply defined edges and massive washes; others are as softly subtle as velvet, with colours and tones melting imperceptibly into each other. And between the extremes are almost every other variety. There is no correspondence between treatment and subject. Mr. Watson's mountains express an elemental violence; Mr. Lancaster's are solemn and still. Mr. Russell's treatment of sky and water is sharp and clear; Mr. Redworth's is soft and hazy. Each artist uses the same materials to express a different attitude of mind; the technique is never a "bag of tricks," but one of the means for revealing personality.

So, too, with composition. Sir Charles Holmes is instinct with soaring adventure; Mr. Garside is restful and serene. Place all the artists in front of the same scene and each would

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come away with a different composition, because each would see in terms of himself. It may seem an almost irreverent thing to say, but it is undoubtedly true: the sticks and stones to which we usually give the name "Nature" are relatively unimportant in the composition of a picture: it is the character and temperament of the painter that dominates. He is the most important part of Nature.

4. All artists are dependent on the same basic principles—none dare offend the laws of order, balance, and rhythm—but all have complete freedom of personal application. Surely, then, it follows that the student cannot expect to begin by painting works of art; for facility in handling and knowledge of rules and processes are but a small part of his training. The greatest is the cultivation of the artist himself—the culture of his instinctive attitudes. Two artists may use the same kind of materials, adopt the same technical methods and follow the same laws of composition, but there will be no more than a superficial resemblance in their pictures. Every sincere picture, whatever the subject, is always a portrait of the artist.

5. All discussions as to the relative merits of different styles lead nowhere. There can be no best way for all. Many good pictures (and more bad ones) have been painted in every known style. The important question is: Which is best for each artist? Unless the whole picture—conception and treatment—is not self-expressive it is a lie in paint. And there is as much need for a sense of honour in painting a picture as in any other form of endeavour. Piquancy is added to interest by differences of opinion among specialists—when the doctors disagree. And some readers will be anxious to come to clear conclusions upon the old controversy revived by the expression

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of contrary views on the use of what is generally known as "body colour." For those who are unacquainted with the details it should be explained that Chinese white is sometimes added to transparent pigments to make them "stand out," that is, to show in their actual colours, whatever the colour underneath. To be able to paint spots of, say, pale yellow on black adds considerably to the possibilities of representation. Also there are colours called by the manufacturers "gouache" or "tempera" which act the same way—all are opaque. Should opaque colours be used? That is the question that has for a hundred years divided water-colourists.

Mr. Cecil Hunt is one of the enthusiastic defenders. Miss Airy and Mr. Watson are "purists." They regard transparency as the most precious quality of water-colour, to be preserved at all costs. The pros and cons are seldom stated fairly because the conclusions are based on personal preferences, and arguments are often used to bolster up prejudices while appearing to defend reasons.

Between these two opposed sections is another which uses body colour but not to such an extent as to destroy all transparency. Mr. Garside, for instance, sometimes coats the paper with a wash of Chinese white, allows it to dry and then paints over it with transparent pigments. By this means he gets what *he* wants, and is not concerned with absolute principles. And there are many other painters who adopt some kind of compromise. Then, too, there is a growing body of painters who use both ways. But most of them unite in condemning the practice of painting mainly in transparent pigments with added touches of body colour. Because the surface of the paper, when covered with body colour, is duller than when covered with

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transparent pigments; and when the picture is seen in some lights the body colour looks paler and consequently spotty. Here is a soundly reasoned objection against a method which gives a false effect. But in most of the differences of opinion it rather seems as if painters condemn what they do not want to do and defend what they *do* want to do; and if they like trying every way they are less prone to condemn any. The artist does not live by logic. If he did most of us would be dead!

The only sensible conclusion to be drawn from this discussion is to try all ways and then do what you like.

Practical Advice

GIVING advice is a thankless task and not without its dangers, if taken too literally. But there are certain facts which most artists learn by many failures, and wish that someone had saved them needless waste of time by telling them in the early days of their study. Most important, perhaps, is the cultivation of certain habits which are likely to be helpful to painters of the most diverse aims and temperaments.

1. Be orderly. Water-colour is not an easy medium when practised under the most favourable circumstances. One false step may mean irretrievable ruin. To have to stop in the middle of a wash because a sufficient quantity of colour has not been mixed, or to search for a tube of paint when it is needed at once, to sully a wash because of an insufficient supply of clean water or a dirty brush—these are the signs of a lack of self-discipline which has spoilt many pictures and frayed many tempers.

Have a place for everything required from the beginning to the end of the painting, so that each can be picked up and replaced automatically, leaving every ounce of energy to be concentrated on the actual work.

2. Try to form a complete conception of what you are going to do before putting a touch on the final picture. Go on making preliminary studies until the conception is clear. In some other medium it may be possible to experiment on the picture itself without risk of injury—in water-colour hardly ever. Sketch the subject in charcoal, or on grey paper with black and white chalks in order to make certain of the tones. Try two or three

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ways of laying on the first large washes. Practise the treatment of bits of detail. Go on forming a mental image until you can see your way to the end of the picture without a doubt, and have thus achieved a condition of masterly calm. Be the artist ever so emotionally uplifted there must be no nervous excitement—that is fatal.

3. Be very careful about the drawing. There are times in the evolution of most water-colours when success depends on speed. If you have to stop to consider the shape of the edge of a wash it may dry before you have finished it. Or if the pencilling is too dark you cannot afford to stop and rub it out. The more you know about the picture, the more you will be independent of detailed drawing. Experts are sometimes able to pull a failure out of the fire, and there are such things as lucky accidents. But most accidents are the consequences of faulty preparations and unbusinesslike procedure. If these remarks seem to be too obvious to be worth mention then the reader has yet to sigh over preventable and humiliating misfortunes. Few of us follow this narrow path, but we wish we did!

4. Choose your own methods. Experiment with as many as you please, but select only those by which you can naturally express yourself. It would be difficult to find, within the covers of any other book, a more conclusive refutation of the idea that there is one way to paint in water-colours that is more satisfactory than all the other ways. Very few artists manage to alight by instinct or accident on the methods that suit them best. They test and discard till they find what they want. Some never arrive at finality: their changing needs demand changing methods.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

Fundamentally the number of distinct methods is very few but the variations are many, answering in response to individual needs. As it would be senseless to attempt variations upon a method before studying that method the moral is plain: first study the basic methods and then discover, as you proceed, how to adapt one or more to your own especial use.

5. Take every opportunity to see fine water-colours; not to copy a style but to discover how different artists deal with the same problems. Try to find out the stages through which the drawings have passed; and when anything appeals to you as a solution of one of your own difficulties, try it. But never fall into that most despicable vice of making your pictures as nearly as possible like those of some popular painter in the hope of stealing his thunder. The only legitimate use to make of other painter's work is to learn how better to express your own ideas, not theirs. Should you have the good fortune to be able to watch an efficient artist at work make the most of it, but don't be over-influenced by his mannerisms.

6. Give adequate consideration to framing. A faintly tinted mount, a few lines ruled round it, a deep bevel, a toned frame: these are matters that may greatly enhance the appearance of the picture—and the chances of its sale. Have at hand three or four mounts of different makes and tints and try the picture behind them each at every stage of its progress.

7. Get your pictures into exhibitions as soon as you feel that you will not disgrace the wall. You may find, at first, that your picture looks weaker than you expected. This is not necessarily a fault, because many pictures are painted on the strong side to better contend with competition. But probably your picture will be really weak—lacking firmness of tone,

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strength of design and purity of colour. There is nothing like the demonstration of a picture gallery to tell you how nearly you have arrived.

8. Above all, go on painting, observing, remembering, composing, experimenting. Fill the minutes generally occupied by day-dreaming, wool-gathering, and other ways of wasting time, in developing your sense of line, tone, and colour. Formulate a series of questions and test your knowledge at every opportunity. Ask yourself: How much darker is that tree than that sky? How cold is that shade and how warm is that light? How much does that line incline and how much longer or shorter is it than the next one? Why is that combination of colours unpleasant? What could be added or subtracted to improve it? You will be painfully surprised to know how far from the truth are many of your first impressions; your blunders in observation will go far to explain the ineffectiveness of your pictures. You can learn much and continually about picture making while walking along the streets or sitting in a train by cultivating habits of systematic observation and memory, and by coming to definite conclusions. Good pictures are painted with good heads.

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